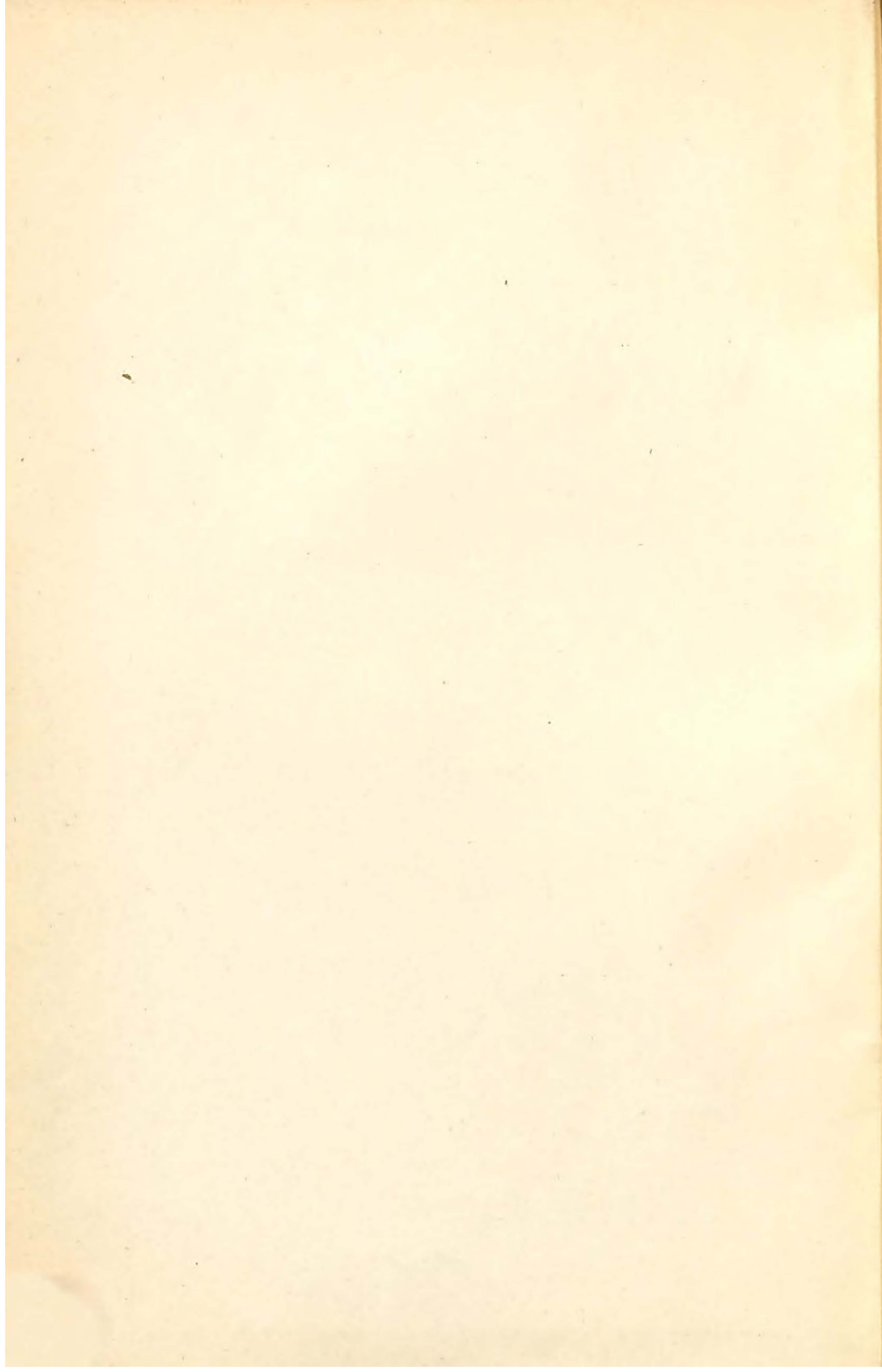




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Wordsworth

THE LIFE OF
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.



Wordsworth, Works ed. Knight
vol. 11.

THE
L I F E
OF
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

BY
WILLIAM KNIGHT, LL.D.,

PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY, ST ANDREWS.

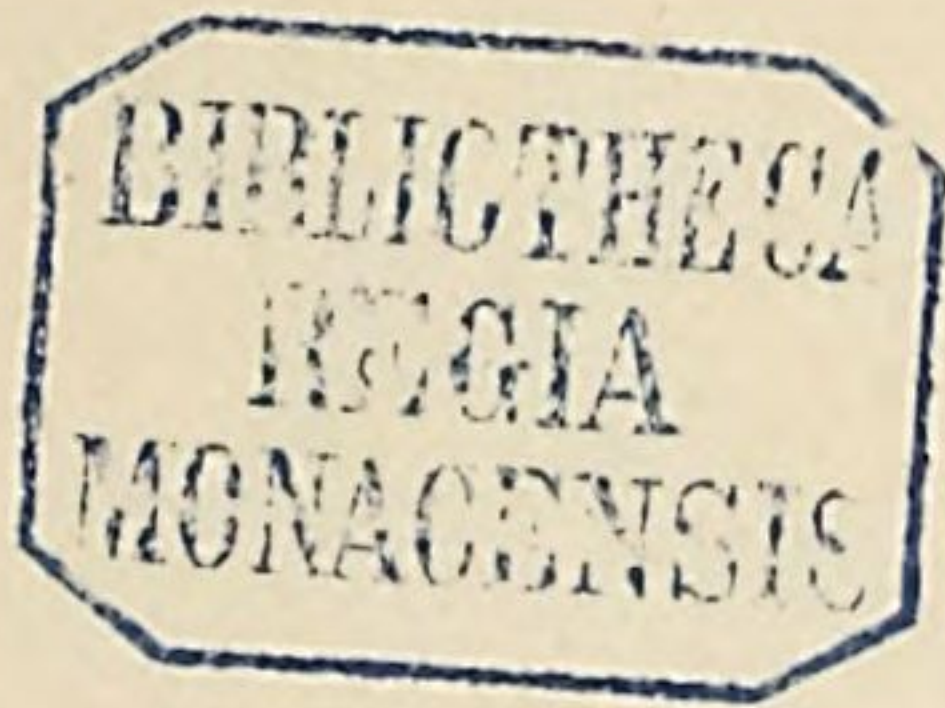


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ERRATA IN VOL. III.

P. 103, *add footnote for* "Lady B.," "Lady E.," "Miss P.": "Lady Beaumont, Lady Eleanor Butler, Miss Ponsonby."

Do. line 19, *after* "flows," *add footnote*: "See vol. vii. p. 121."

P. 105, line 13, *add footnote*: "See vol. vii. p. 122."

P. 108, line 21, *for* "author," *read* "investor."

P. 110, line 18, *add footnote*: "See the poem, pp. 117-123."

P. 194, line 8 from foot, *add footnote at* "Alaric Watts": "This was *The Englishman's Magazine*, which began in April and ended in October, 1831."

P. 214, line 3, *add footnote at* "ascertained": "The volume was probably his *Selections from the Works of Taylor, Hooker, Barrow, etc.*"

Do. line 18, *for* "book" *read* "books."

P. 225, line 12, *after* "Trevenen," *add*: "daughter of the Rev. T. Trevenen, Rector of Cardenham, and a great friend of Sara Coleridge."

P. 234, line 4 from foot, *for* "moral" *read* "mortal."



CHAPTER XXXI.

TOUR ON THE CONTINENT, 1820.

IN the autumn of 1820, Wordsworth, with his wife and sister, Mr. and Mrs. Monkhouse, and Miss Horrocks (a sister of Mrs. Monkhouse), left England together for a tour on the Continent. They started from Dover on the 11th of July, went by Brussels to Cologne, up the Rhine to Switzerland, were joined by Henry Crabb Robinson at Lucerne, crossed over to the Italian lakes and Milan, came back to Switzerland, and through France to Paris, where they spent a month. Returning to London in November, they stayed some time in town, and went north by Cambridge and Coleorton, arriving at Rydal Mount on Christmas Eve. Dorothy Wordsworth wrote a Journal of this Tour, taking notes at the time, and extending them on her return to Westmoreland. Mrs. Wordsworth kept another (briefer) record of the same journey; Mr. Crabb Robinson also wrote a diary of it. Wordsworth memorialised the tour in a series of poems, very few of which were written at the time; and when he wrote them afterwards at Rydal Mount, it is evident that he had frequent recourse to the two family Journals, particularly to his sister's. Writing to Mrs. Clarkson from Coblenz, July 22d, Dorothy said: "Journals we shall have in abundance; for all, except my brother and Mr. Monkhouse, keep a Journal. Mine is nothing but notes, unintelligible to any one but myself. I look forward, however, to many a pleasant hour's employment at Rydal Mount in filling up the chasms."

Extracts from the Journals of Mrs. and Miss Wordsworth have been given in Volume VI., as notes supplementary to the poems of this Continental Tour; and it is hard to say whether the jottings taken at the time by his wife, or the extended Journal afterwards written out by his sister, is the more admirable, both as a record of travel, and as a commentary on the poet's work.

It would be a mistake to publish these Journals *in extenso*; but they certainly contain a very vivid picture of the state of the towns and countries which the Wordsworths passed through at the time when they were written, and of the style of continental travelling in the first quarter of the present century. I do not repeat in this chapter what was printed in Volume VI., although the continuity of the narrative will doubtless suffer much from the omissions; but I make some additional extracts from the earlier part of Miss Wordsworth's Journal of the first five weeks, down to the time at which Mr. Crabb Robinson joined their party at Lucerne.

In October 1821, Mr. Robinson was visiting at Rydal Mount, and after reading over these Journals of Mrs. and Miss Wordsworth, he wrote thus in his *Diary*:—

“*2d Oct. '21.*—I read to-day, and afterwards, part of Miss, and also Mrs. W.'s Journal in Switzerland. They put mine to shame.* They had adopted a plan of journalising which could not fail to render the account amusing and informing. Mrs. W., in particular, frequently described, as in a panorama, the objects around her; and these were written on the spot: and I recollect her often sitting on the grass, not aware of what kind of employment she had. Now it is evident that a succession of such pictures must represent the face of the country. Their Journals were alike abundant in observa-

* Perhaps the most interesting entry in Henry Crabb Robinson's Journal of the tour is the following: “*26th June 1820.*—I made some cheap purchases: if anything *not wanted* can be cheap.”

tion (in which the writers showed an enviable faculty), and were sparing of reflections, which ought rather to be excited by than obtruded in a book of travels. I think I shall profit on some future occasion by the hint I have taken."

Again, in Nov. 1823, H. C. R. writes in his *Diary*: "Finished Mrs. Wordsworth's Journal. I do not know when I have felt more humble than in reading it. It is so superior to my own. She saw so much more than I did, though we were side by side during a great part of the time."

Robinson advised Dorothy Wordsworth to publish her Journal of this Continental Tour, and she replied to him, 23d May 1824:—

"... Your advice respecting my Continental Journal is, I am sure, very good, provided it were worth while to make a book of it, *i.e.* provided I *could* do so, and provided it were my wish; but it is not. 'Far better,' I say, 'make another tour, and write the Journal on a different plan!' In recopying it, I should, as you advise, omit considerable portions of the description. . . . But, observe, my object is not to make a book, but to leave to my niece a neatly-penned memorial of those few interesting months of our lives. . . ."

The following extracts are from Dorothy's Journal:—

"*Monday, July 10th, 1820.*—We—William, Mary, and Dorothy Wordsworth—left the Rectory House, Lambeth, at a quarter to eight o'clock. Had the 'Union' coach to ourselves, till within two stages of Canterbury, when two young ladies demanded inside places. . . . The Cathedral of Canterbury, described by Erasmus as lifting itself up in 'such majesty towards heaven, that it strikes religion into the beholders from a distance,' looks stately on the plain, when first seen from the gently descending road, and appeared to me a much finer building than in former times; and I felt, as I had often done during my last abode in London, that, whatever change, tend-

ing to melancholy, twenty years might have produced, they had called forth the capacity of enjoying the sight of ancient buildings to which my youth was, comparatively, a stranger. Between London and Canterbury the scenes are varied and cheerful; first Blackheath, and its bordering villas, and shady trees; goats, asses, sheep, etc., pasturing at large near the houses. The Thames glorious; ships like castles, cutting their way as through green meadows, the river being concealed from view; then it spreads out like a wide lake, scattered over with vessels.

Dover, Tuesday, July 11th.—We walked to the Castle before breakfast. The building, when you are close to it, appears even *sublime*, from its immense height and bulk; but it is not rich or beautiful in architecture. The old warder stood in waiting upon the hill to lead us forward. After ascending above a hundred stone steps, we were greeted by the slender tinkling of a bell, a delicately wild sound in that place. It is fixed at the top of a pillar, on which is inscribed a poetical petition in behalf of the prisoners confined above in the Castle.

Calais, Tuesday, July 11.—Landed on the shores of France at half-past one. What shall I say of Calais? I looked about for what I remembered, and looked for new things, and in both quests was gratified. . . . On my bedroom door is inscribed ‘Sterne’s Room,’ and a print of him hangs over the fireplace. The walls painted in panels, handsome carpets, chimney-piece marble-coloured, hearth red, bed-curtains white, sheets coarse, coverlet a mixture of cotton and woollen, beautifully white; but how clumsy all contrivances of braziers and smiths! The bell hangs on the outside of the wall, and gives a single, loud, dull, stroke when pulled by the string, so that you must stand and pull four or five times, as if you were calling the people to prayers.

Calais, Wednesday, July 12.—We rose at five; sunshine and clear, but rather cold air. The Cathedral, a large edifice, not finely wrought; but the first effect is striking, from the size of the numerous pillars and arches, though they are paltry in the finishing, merely whitewashed and stuck over with bad pictures and tawdry images; yet the whole view at the entrance was affecting. Old men and women—*young* women and girls kneeling at their silent prayers, and some we espied, in obscure recesses, before a concealed crucifix, image, or altar. One grey-haired man I cannot forget, whose countenance bore the impression of worldly cares subdued, and peace in heavenly aspiration. . . . Another figure I must not leave unnoticed, a squalid, ragged woman. She sate alone upon some steps at the side of the entrance to the quire. There she sate, with a white dog beside her; no one was near, and the dog and she evidently belonged to each other, probably her only friend, for never was there a more wretchedly forlorn and miserable-looking human being. She did not notice us; but her rags and her melancholy and sickly aspect drew a penny from me, and the change in the woman's skinny, doleful face is not to be imagined: it was brightened by a light and gracious smile—the effect was almost as of something supernatural—she bowed her body, waved her hand, and, with a politeness of gesture unknown in England in almost any station of life, beckoned that we might enter the church, where the people were kneeling upon chairs, of which there might be a thousand—*two* thousand—I cannot say how many—piled up in different parts of the Cathedral. . . .

9 o'clock, Inn-yard, Calais.—Off we drove, preceded by our friends, each postillion smacking his whip along the street with a dexterity truly astonishing. Never before did I know the power of a clumsy whip, in concert with the rattling of wheels upon rough pavement! The effect was certainly not less upon us than upon the spectators, and we jolted away as merry as

children—showed our passports—passed the gateways, draw-bridges, and shabby soldiers, and, fresh to the feeling of being in a foreign land, drove briskly forward, watchful and gay. The country for many miles populous; this makes it amusing, though sandy and flat; no trees worth looking at singly *as* trees. . . .

Half-past 10.—The party gone to bed. This *salle*, where I sit, how unlike a parlour in an English inn! Yet the history of a sea-fight, or a siege, painted on the walls, with the costumes of Philip the Second, or even of our own time, would have better suited my associations, with the names of Gravelines and Dunkirk, than the story of Cupid and Psyche now before my eyes, as large as life, on French paper! The paper is in panels, with big mirrors between, in gilt frames. With all this taste and finery, and wax candles,* and Brussels carpets, what a mixture of troublesome awkwardness! They brought us a ponderous teapot that would not pour out the tea; the latches (with metal enough to fasten up a dungeon) can hardly, by unpractised hands, be made to open and shut the doors! I have seen the diligence come into the yard and unload—heavy, dirty, dusty—a lap-dog walking about the top, like a panther in its cage, and viewing the gulf below. A monkey was an outside passenger when it departed.

Furnes, July 13, Thursday, 5 o'clock.—I will describe this Square. Houses yellow, grey, white, and *there* is a green one! Yet the effect is not gaudy—a half Grecian church, with Gothic spire; storks have built their nests, and are sitting upon the venerable tower of another church, a sight that pleasingly reminds us of our neighbourhood to Holland. The interior of that which outwardly mimics the Grecian is Gothic, and rather handsome in form, but

* A charge was made for wax candles.

whitewashed, and bedaubed with tinsel, and dolls, and tortured images. . . . Bells continually tinkling. *There* goes a woman to her prayers, in a long black cloak, and bright blue stockings; *here* comes a nicely-dressed old woman, leaning on her staff! Surely it is a blessing to the aged in Roman Catholic countries to have the churches always open for them, if it were only that it makes a variety in the course of a long day! How soothing, how natural to the aged, thus to withdraw from the stir of household cares, and occupations in which they can no longer take a part! and I must say (little as I have yet seen of this mode of worshipping God) I never beheld more of the expression of piety and earnest feeling than in some of the very old people in these churches. Every avenue of the square of this little town presents some picturesque continuation of buildings. All is old, and old-fashioned; nothing to complain of but a want of Dutch cleanliness, yet it does not obtrude on the eye, out of doors, and the exterior is grave, decent, and quiet. . . .

The priests in their gaudy attire, with their young white-robed attendants, made a solemn appearance, while clouds of incense were ascending over their heads to the large crucifix above the altar; and the 'pealing organ' sounded to 'the full-voiced quire.' There was a beautiful nun in a grey garment with a long black scarf, white forehead band, belt, and rosary. Intent upon her devotions, she did not cast an eye towards us, and we stood to look at her. The faces of many of the women are handsome, but the steady grace, the chastened motions of their persons, and the mild seriousness of their countenances, are *most* remarkable. . . .

From Furnes to Bruges we had travelled through a flat country, yet with an endless variety, produced by the various produce of a beautiful soil carefully cultivated. We had been told that the country between Ghent and Bruges was much of the same kind, only not so interesting, therefore we were not sorry to interpose

the variety of the packet-boat to Ghent. . . . And, when all was ready, took our places on the deck of the vessel. The tinkling of a bell, the signal for departure; and we glided gently away with motion only perceptible by the *eye*, looking at the retreating objects on the shore. . . . Two nuns and a priest (his prayer-book in his hand), an English dandy, a handsome lady-like Flemish girl, dressed in an elegant gauze mob-cap with flowers, and robe *à la française*, were the most noticeable people. . . . The groups under the awning would make a lively picture. The priest, in his cocked hat, standing at his prayers, the pretty maiden in her cap and flowers, and *there* are the nuns. My brother and the nuns are very merry. *They* seem to have left their prayer-books at home, and one of them has a pamphlet in her hand that looks like a magazine. Low cottages, pretty and clean, close to the bank; a woman scouring a copper vessel, in white jacket, red cap, blue petticoat, and clean sailcloth apron; the flat country to be seen over the low banks of the canal, spires and towers, and sometimes a village may be descried among trees; many little public-houses to tempt a landing; near one I see a pleasant arbour, with seats aloft for smoking. . . . The nuns are merry; so is the priest, in his spectacles; the dandy recommends shoes, in preference to boots, as more convenient. 'There is nobody that can clean either on the Continent.' For my part, I think they clean *them* as well as anything else, except their vessels for cookery! they cannot get the dust out of a chair, or *rub* a table! . . . William and I remained till the carriages were safely landed, amid a confusion of tongues, French, German, and English, and inarticulate shoutings, such as belong to all nations. . . . Canals round the town, rows of trees, fortifications converted into pleasure-grounds. We pass through old and picturesque streets, with an intermixture of houses of a later date, and showy shops; an appearance of commerce and bustle, which makes the contrast with Bruges

the more striking, as the architecture of the ancient houses is of the same kind. William and I, with our English lady, reached first the appointed inn, though our friends had left the boat long before us. . . .

Ghent.—After tea, walked through the city. The buildings, streets, squares, all are picturesque. The houses, green, blue, pink, yellow, with richest ornaments still varying. Strange it is that so many and such strongly-contrasted colours should compose an undiscordant whole. Towers and spires overlook the lofty houses, and nothing is wanting of venerable antiquity at Ghent to give to the mind the same melancholy composure, which cannot but be felt in passing through the streets of Bruges—nothing but the impression that no change is going on, except through the silent progress of time. *There* the very dresses of the women might have been the same for hundreds of years. *Here*, though the black cloak is prevalent, we see a mixture of all kinds, from the dress of the English or French belle to that of the poorest of our poor in a country town. . . .

Saturday, July 15.—The architecture is a mixture of Gothic and Grecian. Three orders of pillars, one above another, the Gothic part very rich. . . . Multitudes of swallows were wheeling round the roof, regardless of carts and hammers, or whatever noise was heard below, and the effect was indescribably interesting. The restless motions and plaintive call of those little creatures seemed to impart a stillness to every other object, and had the power to lead the imagination gently on to the period when that once superb but now decaying structure shall be ‘lorded over and possessed by nature.’ . . .

Arrival at Brussels.—Light and shade very solemn upon the drawbridge. Passing through a heavy gateway, we entered the city, and drove through street after street with a pleasure wholly new to us. Garlands of fresh boughs and flowers in festoons hung on each side, and the great height of the houses,

especially in the narrow streets (lighted as they were), gave a beautiful effect to the exhibition. Some of the streets were very steep, others long or winding; and in the triangular openings at the junction of different streets there was generally some stately ornament. For instance, in one place a canopy, with white drapery attached to the centre, and suspended in four inverted arches by means of four pillars at the distance of six or seven yards from the centre.

Sunday, July 16th.—Brussels.—After breakfast, proceeded through the park, a very large open space with shady walks, statues, fountains, pools, arbours, and seats, and surrounded by palaces and fine houses—to the Cathedral, which, though immensely large, was so filled with people that we could scarcely make our way so as, by standing upon chairs (for which we paid two sous each), to have a view of the building over the multitudes of heads. The priests, at high mass, could not be seen; but the melody of human voices, accompanied by the organ, pierced through every recess—then came bursts of sound like thunder; and, at times, the solemn rousing of the trumpet. Powerful as was the effect of the music, the excessive heat and crowding after a short while overcame every other feeling, and we were glad to go into the open air. Our *laquais de place* conducted us to the house of a shop-keeper, where, from a room in the attics, we might view the procession. It was close to one of the triangular openings with which most of the streets of Brussels terminate. To the right, we looked down the street along which the procession was to come, and, a little to the left below us, overlooked the triangles, in the centre of which was a fountain ornamented with three marble statues, and a pillar in the midst, topped by a golden ball—the whole decorated with festoons of holly, and large roses made of paper, alternately red and yellow. In like manner the garlands were composed in all the streets through which the procession was to pass; but in some parts there were

also young fir-trees stuck in the pavement, leaving a footway between them and the houses. Paintings were hung out by such as possessed them, and ribands and flags. The street where we were was lined with people assembled like ourselves in expectation, all in their best attire. Peasants to be distinguished by their short jackets, petticoats of scarlet or some other bright colour (in contrast), crosses, or other ornament of gold or gilding; the bourgeois, with black silk scarfs overhead, and reaching almost to their feet; ladies, a little too much of the French or English; little girls, with or without caps, and some in elegant white veils. The windows of all the houses open, and people seen at full length, or through doorways, sitting, or standing in patient expectation. It amused us to observe *them*, and the arrangements of their houses—which were even splendid, compared with those of persons of like condition in our own country—with an antique cast over all. Nor was it less amusing to note the groups or lines of people below us. Whether standing in the hot sunshine, or the shade, they appeared equally contented. Some approached the fountain—a sacred spot!—to drink of the pure waters, out of which rise the silent statues. The spot is sacred; for there, before the priests arrived in the procession, incense was kindled in the urns, and a pause was made with the canopy of the Host, while they continued chanting the service. But I am going too fast.

The procession was, in its beginning, military, and its approach announced by sound of trumpets. Then came a troop of cavalry, four abreast, splendidly accoutred, dressed in blue and gold, and accompanied by a full band of music; next, I think, the magistrates and constituted authorities. But the order of the procession I do not recollect; only that the military, civil, and religious authorities and symbols were pleasingly combined, and the whole spectacle was beautiful. Long before the sound of the sacred service reached our ears, the martial music had died away in the distance, though there was no interruption in

the line of the procession. The contrast was very pleasing when the solemn chaunting came along the street, with the stream of banners ; priests and choristers in their appropriate robes ; and not the least pleasing part of it was a great number of young girls, two and two, all dressed in white frocks. It was a day made on purpose for this exhibition ; the sun seemed to be feasting on the gorgeous colours and glittering banners ; and there was no breeze to disturb garland or flower. When all was passed away, we returned to the Cathedral, which we found not so crowded as much to interrupt our view : yet the whole effect of the interior was much injured by the decorations for the fête—especially by stiff orange-trees in tubs, placed between the pillars of the aisles. Though not equal to those of Bruges or Ghent, it is a very fine Gothic building, massy pillars and numerous statues, and windows of painted glass—an ornament which we have been so accustomed to in our own cathedrals that we lamented the want of it at Ghent and Bruges.

Monday, July 17th.—Brussels.—Brussels exhibits in its different quarters the stateliness of the ancient and the princely splendour of modern times, mixed with an uncouth irregularity, resembling that of the lofty tiers of houses at Edinburgh ; but the general style of building in the old streets is by no means so striking as in those of Ghent or Bruges. . . .

Waterloo.—Waterloo is a mean village ; straggling on each side of the broad highway, children and poor people of all ages stood on the watch to conduct us to the church. Within the circle of its interior are found several mural monuments of our brave soldiers—long lists of naked names inscribed on marble slabs—not less moving than laboured epitaphs displaying the sorrow of surviving friends. . . . Here we took up the very man who was Southey's guide (Lacoste), whose name will make a figure in history. He bowed to us with French ceremony and

liveliness, seeming proud withal to show himself as a sharer in the terrors of that time when Buonaparte's confusion and overthrow released him from unwilling service. He had been tied upon a horse as Buonaparte's guide through the country previous to the battle, and was compelled to stay by his side till the moment of flight. . . .

Monday, July 17th.—Brussel.—The sky had been overshadowed by clouds during most of our journey, and now a storm threatened us, which helped our own melancholy thoughts to cast a gloom over the open country, where few trees were to be seen except forests on the distant heights. The ruins of the severely contested chateau of Hougomont had been ridded away since the battle, and the injuries done to the farm-house repaired. Even these circumstances, natural and trivial as they were, suggested melancholy thoughts, by furnishing grounds for a charge of ingratitude against the course of things, that was thus hastily removing from the spot all vestiges of so momentous an event. Feeble barriers against this tendency are the few frail memorials erected in different parts of the field of battle! and we could not but anticipate the time, when through the flux and reflux of war, to which this part of the Continent has always been subject, or through some turn of popular passion, *these* also should fall; and 'Nature's universal robe of green, humanity's appointed shroud,' enwrap them:—and the very names of those whose valour they record be cast into shade, if not obliterated even in their own country, by the exploits of recent favourites in future ages.

Tuesday, July 18th.—Namur.—Before breakfast, we went to the church of the Jesuits; beautiful pillars of marble, roof of pumice-stone curiously wrought, the colour chaste and sombre. The churches of Ghent and Bruges are injured by

being whitewashed : that of Brussels is of a pale grey, or stone-colour, which has a much better effect, though nothing equal to the roof of the Jesuits' church at Namur ; yet in one point (*i.e.* the painted windows) the Cathedral of Brussels surpasses all the churches we have yet seen. . . . Several women passed us who had come thither to attend upon the labourers employed in repairing and enlarging the fortifications. Their dresses were neat and gay ; and, in that place of which we had so often read in histories of battles and sieges, their appearance, while they struggled cheerfully with the blustering wind, was wild and romantic. The fondness for flowers appears in this country wherever you go. Nothing is more common than to see a man, driving a cart, with a rose in his mouth. At the very top of our ascent, I saw one at work with his spade, a full-blown rose covering his lips, which he must have brought up the hill,—or had some favourite lass there presented it to him ? . . .

Wednesday, July 19th.—Liège.—My first entrance into the market-place brought a shock of cheerful sensation. It was like the bursting into life of a Flemish picture. Such profusion of fruit ! such outspreading of flowers ! and heaps of vegetables ! and such variety in the attire of the women ! A curious and abundant fountain, surrounded with large stone basins, served to wash and refresh the vegetables. Torrents of voices assailed us while we threaded our way among the fruit and fragrant flowers ; bouquets were held out to us by half a score of sunburnt arms at once. The women laughed—*we* laughed, took one bouquet, and gave two sous, our all. . . . Left Liège about 9 o'clock—were recognised and greeted by many of the women at their stalls as we passed again through the market-place. . . . Ascended a very steep hill, on the top of which stands the ruined convent of the Chartreuse, and there we left our carriages to look back upon the fine view of

the city, spreading from the ridge of the crescent hill opposite to us (which is, however, somewhat unpleasingly scarified by new fortifications), and over the central plain of the vale, to the magnificent river which, split into many channels, flows at the foot of the eminence where we stood. . . . Still, as we proceed, we are reminded of England—the fields, even the cottages, and large farm-houses, are English-like ; country undulating, and prospects extensive, yet continually some pretty little spot detains the eye ; groups of cottages, or single ones, green to the very door.*

Thursday, July 20th.—Aix-la-Chapelle.—I went to the Cathedral, a curious building, where are to be seen the chair of Charlemagne, on which the Emperors were formerly crowned, some marble pillars much older than *his* time, and many pictures ; but I could not stay to examine any of these curiosities, and gladly made my way alone back to the inn to rest there. The market-place is a fine old square ; but at Aix-la-Chapelle there is always a mighty preponderance of poverty and dulness, except in a few of the showiest of the streets, and even there, a flashy meanness, a slight patchery of things falling to pieces, is everywhere visible. . . .

Road to Cologne.—At the distance of ten miles we saw before us, over an expanse of open country, the Towers of Cologne. Even at this distance they appeared very tall and bulky ; and Mary pointed out that one of them was a ruin, which no other eyes could discover. To the left was a range of distant hills ; and, to the right, in front of us, another range—rather a *cluster*—which we looked at with peculiar interest, as guardians and companions of the famous river Rhine, whither we were tending, and (sick and weary though I

* Compare *Tintern Abbey*, “Pastoral farms green to the very door.”—See vol. i. p. 266.

was) I felt as much of the glad eagerness of hope as when I first visited the Wye, and all the world was fresh and new. Having travelled over the intermediate not interesting country, the massy ramparts of Cologne, guarded by grotesque turrets, the bridges, and heavy arched gateways, the central towers and spires, rising above the concealed mass of houses in the city, excited something of gloomy yet romantic expectation.

Friday, July 21st.—Cologne.—I busied myself repairing garments already tattered in the journey, at the same time observing the traffic and business of the river, here very wide, and the banks low. I was a prisoner; but really the heat this morning being oppressive, I felt not even a wish to stir abroad, and could, I believe, have been amused more days than one by the lading and unlading of a ferry-boat, which came to and started from the shore close under my window. Steadily it floats on the lively yet smooth water, a square platform, not unlike a section cut out of a thronged market-place, and the busy crowd removed with it to the plain of water. The square is enclosed by a white railing. Two slender pillars rise from the platform, to which the ropes are attached, forming between them an inverted arch, elegant enough. When the boat draws up to her mooring-place, a bell, hung aloft, is rung as a signal for a fresh freight. All walk from the shore, without having an inch to rise or to descend. Carts with their horses wheel away—rustic, yet not without parade of stateliness—the foreheads of the meanest being adorned with scarlet fringes. In the neighbourhood of Brussels (and indeed all through the *Low Countries*), we remarked the large size and good condition of the horses, and their studied decorations, but near Brussels those decorations were the *most* splendid. A scarlet net frequently half-covered each of the six in procession. The frock of the driver, who paces beside the train, is often handsomely embroidered, and its rich colour (Prussian blue) enlivens the

scarlet ornaments of his steeds. But I am straying from my ferry-boat. The first debarkation which we saw early in the morning was the most amusing. Peasants, male and female, sheep, and calves; the women hurrying away, with their cargoes of fruit and vegetables, as if eager to be beforehand with the market. But I will transcribe verbatim from my journal, 'written at mid-day,' the glittering Rhine spread out before me, in width that helped me to image forth an American lake.

‘It has gone out with a fresh load, and returned every hour; the comers have again disappeared as soon as landed; and now, the goers are gathering together. Two young ladies trip forward, their dark hair *basketed* round the crown of the head, green bags on their arms, two gentlemen of their party; next a lady with smooth black hair stretched upward from the forehead, and a skull-cap at the top, like a small dish. The gentry passengers seem to arrange themselves on one side, the peasants on the other;—how much more picturesque the peasants! *There* is a woman in a sober dark-coloured dress; she wears no cap. Next, one with red petticoat, blue jacket, and cap as white as snow. Next, one with a red handkerchief over her head, and a long brown cloak. There a smart female of the bourgeoisie—dark shawl, white cap, blue dress. Two women (now seated side by side) make a pretty picture: their attire is scarlet, a pure white handkerchief falling from the head of each over the shoulders. They keep watch beside a curiously constructed basket, large enough to contain the marketing of a whole village. A girl crosses the platform with a handsome brazen ewer hanging on her arm. Soldiers—a dozen at least—are coming in. They take the centre. Again two women in scarlet garb, with a great fruit basket. A white cap next; the same with a green shawl. *There* is a sunburnt daughter of toil! her olive skin whitens her white head-dress, and she is decked in lively colours. One beside

her, who, I see, counts herself of higher station, is distinguished by a smart French mob. I am brought round to the gentry side, which is filled up, as you may easily fancy, with much less variety than the other. A cart is in the centre, its peasant driver, not to be unnoticed, with a polished tobacco-pipe hung over his cleanly blue frock. Now they float away !'

Cologne, Friday, July 21st.—Before I left the interior of the Cathedral, I ought to have mentioned that the side-chapels contain some superb monuments. There is also a curious picture (marvellously rich in enamel and colouring) of the Three Kings of Cologne, and of a small number of the eleven thousand virgins, who were said, after shipwreck, to have landed at this city in the train of St. Ursula. The Huns, who had possession of the city, became enamoured of their beauty ; and the fair bevy, to save themselves from persecution, took the veil ; in commemoration of which event the convent of St. Ursula was founded, and within the walls of that church an immense number of their skulls (easily turned into eleven thousand), are ranged side by side dressed in green satin caps. We left these famous virgins (though our own countrywomen), unvisited, and many other strange sights ; and what wonder ? we had but one day ; and *I* saw nothing within gate or door except the Cathedral—not even Rubens's famous picture of the Crucifixion of St. Peter, a grateful offering presented by him as an altar-piece for the church in which he was baptized, and had served as a chorister. Among the outrages committed at Cologne during the Revolution, be it noted that the Cathedral, in 1800, was used as a granary, and that Buonaparte seized on the picture bestowed on his parish church by Rubens, and sent it to Paris. The Three Kings shared the same fate.

The houses of Cologne are very old, overhanging, and uncouth ; the streets narrow and gloomy in the cheerfulest of

their corners or openings ; yet oftentimes pleasing. Windows and balconies make a pretty show of flowers ; and birds hang on the outside of houses in cages. These sound like cheerful images of active leisure ; but with such feeling it is impossible to walk through these streets. Yet it is pleasing to note how quietly a dull life may be varied, and how innocently ; though, in looking at the plants which yearly put out their summer blossoms to adorn these decaying walls and windows, I had something of the melancholy which I have felt on seeing a human being gaily dressed—a female tricked out with ornaments, while disease and death were on her countenance.

Cologne, Saturday, July 22d.—Upon a bright sunny morning, driven by a civil old postillion, we turned our backs upon the cathedral tower of Cologne, an everlasting monument of riches and grandeur, and I fear of devotion passed away ; of sublime designs unaccomplished—remaining, though not wholly developed, sufficient to incite and guide the dullest imagination,—

Call up him who left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold !

Feelingly has Milton selected this story, not from a preference to the subject of it (as has been suggested), but from its paramount accordance with the musings of a melancholy man—in being left *half*-told—

Foundations must be laid
In Heaven ; for, 'mid the wreck of *is* and *was*,
Things incomplete and purposes betrayed
Make sadder transits o'er truth's mystic glass
Than noblest objects utterly decayed.

Bonn.—The great area of the vale here is a plain, covered with corn, vines, and fruit-trees : the impression is of richness, profusion, amplitude of space. The hills are probably higher than some of our own which we call mountains ; but on the

spot we named them hills. Such they appeared to our eyes; but when objects are all upon a large scale there is no means of comparing them accurately with others of their kind, which do not bear the same proportions to the objects with which they are surrounded. Those in the neighbourhood of Bonn are of themselves sufficiently interesting in shape and variety of surface: but what a dignity does the form of an ancient castle or tower confer upon a precipitous woody or craggy eminence! Well might this lordly river spare one or two of his castles,—which are too numerous for the most romantic fancy to hang its legends round each and all of them,—well might he spare, to our purer and more humble streams and lakes, one solitary ruin for the delight of our poets of the English mountains! To the right (but let him keep this to himself, it is too grand to be coveted by us) is the large ruined castle of Gottesberg, far-spreading on the summit of the hill—very light and elegant, with one massy tower.

The trees, however, in the whole of the country through which we have hitherto passed, are not to be compared with the trees of England, except on the banks of the Meuse. On the Rhine they are generally small in size; much of the wood appears to be cut when young, to spring again. In the little town of Remagan where we changed horses, crowds of people of all ages gathered round us; the beggars, who were indefatigable in clamour, might have been the only inhabitants of the place who had any work to do. . . .

Andernach.—Departed at about five o'clock. Andernach is an interesting place, both at its entrance from Cologne, and its outlet towards Coblenz. There is a commanding desolation in the first approach; the massy square tower of defence, though bearded by green shrubs, stands, as it were, untameable in its strength, overlooking the half-ruined gateway of the ramparts. Close to the other gate, leading to Coblenz, are seen many

picturesque fragments and masses ; and the ancient walls shelter and adorn fruitful gardens, cradled in the otherwise now useless trenches. The town itself appears so dull—the inhabitants so poor, that it was almost surprising to observe walks for public use and pleasure, with avenues and harbours on the level adjoining the ramparts. The struggle between melancholy and cheerfulness, fanciful improvements, and rapid decay, leisure and poverty, was very interesting. We had a fine evening ; and the ride, though, in comparison with the last, of little interest—the vale of the Rhine being here wide and level, the hills lowered by distance—was far from being a dull one, as long as I kept myself awake. I was roused from sleep in crossing the bridge of the Moselle near Coblenz.

Coblenz, Sunday, July 23d.—Cathedral.—The music at our entrance fixed us to our places. The swell was solemn, even *aweful*, sinking into strains of delicious sweetness ; and though the worship was to us wholly unintelligible, it was not possible to listen to it without visitings of devotional feeling. Mary's attention was entirely absorbed till the service ceased, and I think she never stirred from her seat. After a little while I left her, and drew towards the railing of the gallery, to look round on the congregation, among whom there appeared more of old-fashioned gravity, and of antique gentility, than I have seen anywhere else ; and the varieties of costume were infinite. . . . All that we witnessed of bustle or gaiety was near the river, facing the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein ; and upon the wide wooden bridge which we crossed in our way to the fortress. Fruit-women were seated on the bridge, and peasants, gentry, soldiers, continually passing to and fro. All but the soldiers paid toll. The citadel stands upon a very lofty bare hill, and the walk was fatiguing ; but I beguiled my weariness with the company of a peasant lass, who took pains to understand my broken German, and contrived to make me

acquainted with no small part of her family history. . . . This bonny maiden's complexion was as fresh as a rose, though no kerchief screened it from the sunshine. Many a fierce breeze, and many a burning sun must she have struggled with, in her way from the citadel to the town; and, on looking at her, I fancied there must be a stirring and invigorating power in the wind to counteract the cankering effect of the sun, which is so noticeable in the French peasantry on their hot dry plains. No sooner do you set foot in the neighbourhood of Calais than you are struck with it; and, at the same time, with the insensibility of young and old to discomfort from glaring light and heat. Whatever slender shade of willows may be at the door of a hut on the flats between Calais and Gravelines, the female peasants, at their sewing or other work, choose it not, but seat themselves full in the sunshine. Thence comes a habit of wrinkling the cheeks and forehead, so that their faces are mostly ploughed with wrinkles before they are fifty years old. In this country, and all through the Netherlands, the complexions of the people are much fresher and fairer than in France, though *they* also are much out of doors. This may perhaps be, in part, attributed to the greater quantity of wood scattered over the country, and to the shade of garden and orchard trees. . . . The view from the summit of the hill of Ehrenbreitstein is magnificent. Beneath, on a large, flat angle, formed by the junction of the Rhine and the Moselle, stands the city, its purple-slatted roofs surrounded by many tall buildings—towers and spires, and big palaces among trees. The vale of the Moselle is deep and green, formed by vine-clad steeps, among which the eye, from the heights where we stood, espies many a pleasant village. That of the Rhine is more varied and splendid—with towns that, from their size, the irregularity of the buildings, and their numerous towers and spires, give dignity to the proud river itself, and to the prodigally scattered hills. Downwards we looked through the plain,

along which we had travelled the evening before from the town of Andernach, which stands, as Coblenz does, upon a low bank of the Rhine : and there is no eminence between the two towns to obstruct the view. The course of the road, which is widely parted from that of the river, may be seen in a straight line for many miles. We behold below us the junction of the two great rivers ; how steady and quiet is their meeting ! A little while each goes in his own distinct path, side by side, yet one stream ; and they slowly and by degrees unite, each lost in the other—happy type of a tranquil meeting, and joining together in the journey of life !

Coblenz, as every one knows, was for a long time the headquarters of the French *noblesse*, and other emigrants, during the Revolution ; and it is surprising that in the exterior of manners and habits there should be so little to remind the passing traveller of the French. In Ghent and Brussels, it is impossible to forget that you are in towns *not* making a part of France ; yet, in both those places, the French have sown seeds which will never die—their manners, customs, and decorations are everywhere struggling with the native stiffness of the Flemish : but in *Coblenz* it is merely incidentally that the French courtier or gentleman is brought to mind ; and shops, houses, public buildings, are all of the soil where they have been reared—so at least they appeared to us, in our transient view.

St. Goar, Monday, July 24th.— . . . The town, seen from the heights, is very beautiful, with purple roofs, two tall spires, and one tower. On the opposite side of the river we peep into narrow valleys, formed by the lofty hills, on which stand two ruins called, as we were told by our lively attendant, the Katzen and Maus Towers (*i.e.* the Towers of the Cat and the Mouse). They stare upon each other at safe distance,

though near neighbours; and, across the river, the greater fortress of Rheinfels defies them both. A lovely dell runs behind one of the hills; at its opening where it pours out its stream into the Rhine we espied a one-arched Borrowdale bridge, and behind the bridge a village almost buried between the abruptly-rising steeps. . . . I will transcribe the few words I wrote in my memorandum-book, dated 'Beside the Rhine, St. Goar':—'How shall I describe this soothing place! The river flows on. I see it flow, yet it is like a lake—the bendings of the hills enclosing it at each end. Here I sit, half-way from the centre of the curve. . . . I see the Borrowdale bridge beside the lowly hamlet in the cleft of the other dell. A ferry-boat has been approaching its landing-place with a crew of peasants. They come now slowly up from the shore, a picturesque train in grey attire—no showy colours; and at this moment I can fancy that even that circumstance gives a sweeter effect to the scene, though I have never wished to expel the crimson garments, or the blue, from any landscape.' Here let me observe that grey clothing—the pastoral garb of *our* mountains—does, when it is found on the banks of the Rhine, only look well at a certain distance. It seems not to be worn from choice, but poverty; and in this day's journey we have met with crowds of people whose dress was accordant with the appearance close at hand of their crumbling houses and fortifications.

Bingen, Tuesday, July 25th.—Most delightful to the imagination was our journey of yesterday, still tempting to hope and expectation! Yet wherever we passed through a village or small town the veil of romance was withdrawn, and we were compelled to think of human distress and poverty—their causes how various in a country where Nature has been so bountiful—and, even when removed from the immediate presence of painful objects, there is one melancholy thought

which will attend the traveller along the ever-winding course of the Rhine—the thought that of those buildings, so lavishly scattered on the ridges of the heights or lurking in sheltering corners, many *have* perished, all *are* perishing, and *will entirely* perish! Buildings that link together the Past and the Present—times of war and depredation, of piracy, of voyages by stealth and in fear, of superstitious ceremonies, of monastic life, of quiet, and of retreat from persecution! Yet some of the strongest of the fortresses may, for aught I know, endure as long as the rocks on which they have been reared, deserted as they are, and never more be tenanted by pirate, lord, or vassal. The parish churches are in bad repair, and many ruinous. . . .

Mayence.—I thought of some thriving friar of old times; but last night,* in reading Chaucer's Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, mine host of the *Tabard* recalled to my memory our merry master in the dining-room at Mayence.

Heidelberg, Thursday, July 27th.—After dinner, Mary, Miss H., and I set off towards the castle. . . . The ascent is long and steep, the way plain, and no guide needed, for the castle walks are free; and there—among treasures of art, decaying and decayed, and the magnificent bounties of nature—the stranger may wander the day through. The building is of various dates: it is not good in architecture *as a whole*, though very fine in parts. There is a noble round tower, and the remains of the chapel, and long ranges of lofty and massy wall, often adorned with ivy, the figure of a saint, a lady, or a warrior looking safely from their niches under the ivy bower. The moats, which must long ago have been drained, retain their shape, yet have now the wild luxuriance of sequestered dells.

* This was when writing out her Journal, begun two months after her return to Rydal Mount.

Fruit and forest trees, flowers and grass, are intermingled. I now speak of the more ruinous and the most ancient part of the castle. . . . We walked upon a platform before the windows, where a band of music used to be stationed, as on the terrace at Windsor—a fine place for festivals in time of peace, and to keep watch in time of war. . . . From the platform where we stood, the eye (overlooking the city, bridge, and the deep vale, to the point where the Neckar is concealed from view by its winding to the left) is carried across the plain to the dim stream of the Rhine, perceived under the distant hills. The pleasure-grounds are the most delightful I ever beheld; the happiest mixture of wildness, which no art could overcome, and formality, often necessary to conduct you along the ledge of a precipice—whence you may look down upon the river, enlivened by boats, and on the rich vale, or to the more distant scenes before mentioned. One long terrace is supported on the side of the precipice by arches resembling those of a Roman aqueduct; and from that walk the view of the Castle and the Town beneath it is particularly striking. I cannot imagine a more delightful situation than Heidelberg for a University—the pleasures, ceremonies, and distractions of a Court being removed. Parties of students were to be seen in all quarters of the groves and gardens. I am sorry, however, to say that their appearance was not very scholarlike. They wear whatever wild and coarse apparel pleases them—their hair long and disorderly, or rough as a water-dog, throat bare or with a black collar, and often no appearance of a shirt. Every one has his pipe, and they all talk loud and boisterously. . . .

Never surely was any stream more inviting! It flows in its deep bed—stately, yet often turbulent; and what dells, cleaving the green hills, even close to the city! Looking down upon the purple roofs of Heidelberg variously tinted, the spectacle is curious—narrow streets, small squares, and gardens many and

flowery. The main street, long and also narrow, is (though the houses are built after no good style) very pretty as seen from the heights, with its two gateways and two towers. The Cathedral (it has an irregular spire) overtops all other edifices, which, indeed, have no grace of architecture, and the University is even mean in its exterior; but, from a small distance, *any* city looks well that is not modern, and where there is bulk and irregularity, with harmony of colouring. But we did not enter the cathedral, having so much to see out of doors.

Heidelberg, Friday, July 28th.— . . . The first reach of the river for a moment transported our imagination to the Vale of the Wye above Tintern Abbey. A single cottage, with a poplar spire, was the central object. . . . As we went further, villages appeared. But Mr. P. soon conducted us from the river up a steep hill, and, after a long ascent, he took us aside to a cone-shaped valley, a pleasure-dell—I call it so—for it was terminated by a rural tavern and gardens, seats and alcoves, placed close beside beautiful springs of pure water, spread out into pools and distributed by fountains. A grey stone statue, in its stillness, is a graceful object amid the rushing of water! . . . Our road along the side of the hill, that still rose high above our heads, led us through shady covert and open glade, over hillock or through hollow; at almost every turning convenient seats inviting us to rest, or to linger in admiration of the changeful prospects, where wild and cultivated grounds seemed equally the darlings of the fostering sun. Many of the hills are covered with forests, which are cut down after little more than thirty years' growth; the ground is then ploughed, and sown with buckwheat, and afterwards with beech-nuts. The forests of *firs* (numerous higher up, but not so here) are sown in like manner. Immense quantities of timber are floated down the river. Sometimes in our delightful walk we were led through tracts

of vines, all belonging to the Grand Duke. They are as free as the forest thickets and flowery glades, and separated from them by no distinguishable boundary. Whichever way the eye turned, it settled upon some pleasant sight.

Baden-Baden, July 29th (Saturday).— . . . Met with old-fashioned civility in all quarters. This little town is a curious compound of rural life, German country-townishness, watering-place excitements, court stateliness, ancient mouldering towers, old houses and new, and a life and cheerfulness over all. . . . A bright reflection from the evening sky powdered with golden dust that distant vapoury plain, bounded by the chain of purple mountains. We quitted this spectacle with regret when it faded in the late twilight, struggling with the light of the moon.

Road to Homburg.—Sunday, July 30th.—We were continually reminded of the vales of our own country in this lovely winding valley, where seven times we crossed the clear stream over strong wooden bridges; but whenever in our travels the streams and vales of England have been most called to mind there has been something that marks a difference. Here it is chiefly observable in the large brown wood houses, and in the people—the shepherd and shepherdess gaiety of their dress, with a sort of antiquated stiffness. Groups of children in rustic flower-crowned hats were in several places collected round the otherwise solitary swineherd. . . . The sound of the stream (if there be any sound) is a sweet, unwearied, and unwearying under-song, to detain the pious passenger, which he cannot but at times connect with the silent object of his worship.

Road to Schaffhausen.—A part of the way through the uncleared forest was pleasingly wild; juniper bushes, broom, and

other woodland plants, among the moss and flowery turf. Before we had finished our last ascent, the postillion told us what a glorious sight we *might* have seen, in a few moments, had we been here early in the morning or on a fine evening; but, as it was mid-day, nothing was to be expected. That glorious sight which *should* have been was no less than the glittering prospect of the mountains of Switzerland. We did burst upon an extensive view; but the mountains were hidden; and of the Lake of Constance we saw no more than a vapoury substance where it lay among apparently low hills. This first sight of that country, so dear to the imagination, though then of no peculiar grandeur, affected me with various emotions. I remembered the shapeless wishes of my youth—wishes without hope—my brother's wanderings thirty years ago, and the tales brought to me the following Christmas holidays at Forncett, and often repeated while we paced together on the gravel walk in the parsonage garden, by moon or star light.* . . . The towers of Schaffhausen appear under the shelter of woody and vine-clad hills, but no greetings from the river Rhine, which is not visible from this approach, yet flowing close to the town. . . . But at the entrance of the old city gates you cannot but be roused, and say to yourself, 'Here is something which I have not seen before, yet I hardly know what.' The houses are grey, irregular, dull, overhanging, and clumsy; streets narrow and crooked—the walls of houses often half-covered with rudely-painted representations of the famous deeds of the defenders of this land of liberty. . . . In place of the splendour of faded aristocracy, so often traceable in the German towns, there is a character of ruggedness over all that we see. . . . Never shall I forget the first view of the stream of the Rhine from the bank, and between the side openings of the bridge—rapid in motion, bright, and green as liquid emeralds! and wherever

* Compare vol. ix. p. 54.

the water dashed against tree, stone, or pillar of the bridge, the sparkling and the whiteness of the foam, melting into and blended with the green, can hardly be imagined by any one who has not seen the Rhine, or some other of the great rivers of the Continent, before they are sullied in their course. . . . The first visible indication of our approach to the cataracts was the sublime tossing of vapour above them, at the termination of a curved reach of the river. Upon the woody hill, above that tossing vapour and foam, we saw the old chateau, familiar to us in prints, though there represented in connection with the falls themselves; and now seen by us at the end of the rapid, yet majestic, sweep of the river; where the ever-springing tossing clouds are all that the eye beholds of the wonderful commotion. But an awful sound ascends from the concealed abyss; and it would almost seem like irreverent intrusion if a stranger, at his first approach to this spot, should not pause and listen before he pushes forward to seek the revelation of the mystery. . . . We were gloriously wetted and stunned and deafened by the waters of the Rhine. It is impossible even to remember (therefore, how should I enable any one to imagine?) the power of the dashing, and of the sounds, the breezes, the dancing dizzy sensations, and the exquisite beauty of the colours! The whole stream falls like liquid emeralds—a solid mass of translucent green hue; or, in some parts, the green appears through a thin covering of snow-like foam. Below, in the ferment and hurly-burly, drifting snow and masses resembling collected snow mixed with sparkling green billows. We walked upon the platform, as dizzy as if we had been on the deck of a ship in a storm. Mary returned with Mrs. Monkhouse to Schaffhausen, and William recrossed in a boat with Mr. Monkhouse and me, near the extremity of the river's first sweep, after its fall, where its bed (as is usual at the foot of all cataracts) is exceedingly widened, and larger in proportion to the weight of waters. The boat is trusted to

the current, and the passage, though long, is rapid. At first, when seated in that small unresisting vessel, a sensation of helplessness and awe (it was not fear) overcame me, but that was soon over. From the centre of the stream the view of the cataract in its majesty of breadth is wonderfully sublime. Being landed, we found commodious seats, from which we could look round at leisure, and we remained till the evening darkness revealed two intermitting columns of fire, which ascended from a forge close to the cataract.

August 4th—Lenzburg. . . . At six o'clock we caught a glimpse of the castle walls glittering in sunshine, a hopeful sign, and we set forward through the fog. The ruin stands at the brink of a more than perpendicular, an overhanging rock, on the top of a green hill, which rises abruptly from the town. The steepest parts are ascended by hundreds of stone steps, worn by age, often broken, and half-buried in turf and flowers. These steps brought us to a terrace bordered by neatly-trimmed vines; and we found ourselves suddenly in broad sunshine under the castle walls, elevated above an ocean of vapour, which was bounded on one side by the clear line of the Jura Mountains, and out of which rose at a distance what seemed an island, crested by another castle. We then ascended the loftiest of the towers, and the spectacle all round was magnificent, visionary—I was going to say endless, but on one side was the substantial barrier of the Jura. By degrees (the vapours settling or shifting) other castles were seen on island eminences; and the tops of bare or woody hills taking the same island form; while trees, resembling ships, appeared and disappeared, and rainbow lights (scarcely more visionary than the mimic islands) passed over, or for a moment rested on the breaking mists. On the other side the objects were more slowly developed. We looked long before we could distinguish the far-distant Alps, but by degrees discovered them, shining

like silver among masses of clouds. The intervening wide space was a sea of vapour, but we stayed on the eminence till the sun had mastery of all beneath us, after a silent process of change and interchange—of concealing and revealing. I hope we were not ungrateful to the memory of past times when (standing on the summit of Helvellyn, Scaw Fell, Fairfield, or Skiddaw) we have felt as if the world itself could not present a more sublime spectacle. . . .

Herzogenboschee.—At length we dropped asleep, but were soon roused by a fitful sound of gathering winds, heavy rain followed, and vivid flashes of lightning, with tremendous thunder. It was very awful. Mary and I were sitting together, alone, in the open street; a strange situation! yet we had no personal fear. Before the storm began, all the lights had been extinguished except one opposite to us, and another at an inn behind, where were turbulent noises of merriment, with singing and haranguing, in the style of our village politicians. These ceased; and, after the storm, lights appeared in different quarters; pell-mell rushed the fountain; then came a watchman with his dismal recitative song, or lay; the church clock telling the hours and the quarters, and house clocks with their silvery tone; one scream we heard from a human voice; but no person seemed to notice *us*, except a man who came out upon the wooden gallery of his house right above our heads, looked down this way and that, and especially towards the *voitures*. . . . The beating of the rain, and the rushing of that fountain were continuous, and with the periodical and the irregular sounds (among which the howling of a dog was not the least dismal), completed the wildness of the awful scene, and of our strange situation; sheltered from wet, yet in the midst of it—and exposed to intermitting blasts, though struggling with excessive heat—while flashes of lightning at intervals displayed the distant mountains, and the wide space between; at other times a blank gloom.

Berne.—The fountains of Berne are ornamented with statues of William Tell and other heroes. There is a beautiful order, a solidity, a gravity in this city which strikes at first sight, and never loses its effect. The houses are of one grey hue, and built of stone. They are large and sober, but not heavy or barbarously elbowing each other. On each side is a covered passage under the upper stories, as at Chester, only wider, much longer, and with more massy supporters. . . . In all quarters we noticed the orderly decency of the passengers, the handsome public buildings, with appropriate decorations symbolical of a love of liberty, of order, and good government, with an aristocratic stateliness, yet free from show or parade. . . . The green-tinted river flows below—wide, full, and impetuous. I saw the snows of the Alps burnished by the sun about half an hour before his setting. After that they were left to their wintry marble coldness, without a farewell gleam; yet suddenly the city and the cathedral tower and trees were singled out for favour by the sun among his glittering clouds, and gilded with the richest light. A few minutes, and that glory vanished. I stayed till evening gloom was gathering over the city, and over hill and dale, while the snowy tops of the Alps were still visible.

Sunday, August 6th.—Upon a spacious level adjoining the cathedral are walks planted with trees, among which we sauntered, and were much pleased with the great variety of persons amusing themselves in the same way; and how we wished that one, at least, of our party had the skill to sketch rapidly with the pencil, and appropriate colours, some of the groups or single figures passing before us, or seated in sun or shade. Old ladies appeared on this summer parade dressed in flycaps, such as were worn in England fifty years ago, and broad-flowered chintz or cotton gowns; the bourgeois, in grave attire of black, with tight white sleeves, yet seldom

without ornament of gold lacing, or chain and ear-rings, and on the head a pair of stiff transparent butterfly wings, spread out from behind a quarter of a yard on each side, which wings are to appearance as thin as gauze, but being made of horse-hair, are very durable, and the larger are even made of wire. Among these were seen peasants in shepherdess hats of straw, decorated with flowers and coloured ribands, pretty little girls in grandmothers' attire, and ladies *à la française*. We noticed several parties composed of persons dressed after these various modes, that seemed to indicate very different habits and stations in society—the peasant and the lady, the petty shopkeeper and the wealthy tradesman's wife, side by side in friendly discourse. But it is impossible by words to give a notion of the enlivening effect of these little combinations, which are also interesting as evidences of a state of society worn out in England. Here you see formality and simplicity, antiquated stateliness and decent finery brought together, with a pervading spirit of comfortable equality in social pleasures.

Monday, August 7th.—I sate under an elm-tree, looking down the woody steep to the lake, and across it, to a rugged mountain; no villages to be seen, no houses; the higher Alps shut out. I could have forgotten Switzerland, and fancied myself transported to one of the lonesome lakes of Scotland. I returned to my open station to watch the setting sun, and remained long after the glowing hues had faded from those chosen summits that were touched by his beams, while others were obscurely descried among clouds in their own dark or snowy mantle. . . . Met with an inscription on a grey stone in a little opening of the wood, and would have copied it, for it was brief, but could not see to read the letters, and hurried on, still choosing the track that seemed to lead most directly downwards, and was indeed glad when I found

myself again in the public road to the town. . . . Late as it was, and although twilight had almost given place to the darkness of a fine August night, I was tempted aside into a broad flat meadow, where I walked under a row of tall poplars by the river-side. The castle, church, and town appeared before us in stately harmony, all hues of red roofs and painting having faded away. Two groups of giant poplars rose up, like Grecian temples, from the level between me and the mass of towers and houses. In the smooth water the lingering brightness of evening was reflected from the sky; and lights from the town were seen at different heights on the hill.

Thun, Tuesday, August 8th.—The Lake of Thun is essentially a lake of the Alps. Its immediate visible boundary, third or fourth-rate mountains; but overtopping these are seen the snowy or dark summits of the Jungfrau, the Eiger, the Stockhorn, the Blumlis Alp, and many more which I cannot name; while the Kander, and other raging streams, send their voices across the wide waters. The remains of a ruined castle are sometimes seen upon a woody or grassy steep—pleasing remembrances of distant times, but taking no primary place in the extensive landscape, where the power of nature is magisterial, and where the humble villages composed of numerous houses clustering together near the lake, do not interfere with the impressions of solitude and grandeur. Many of those villages must be more than half-deserted when the herdsmen follow their cattle to the mountains. Others of their numerous inhabitants find subsistence by fishing in the lake. We floated cheerfully along, the scene for ever changing. On the eastern side, to our left, the shores are more populous than on the western; one pretty village succeeded another, each with its spire, till we came to a hamlet, all of brown wood houses, except one large white dwelling, and

no church. . . . The boatmen directed our ears to the sound of waterfalls in a cleft of the mountain ; but the *sight* of them we must leave to other voyagers. . . .

The broad pyramidal mountain, Neisen, rising directly from the lake on the western side towards the head, is always a commanding object. Its *form* recalled to my remembrance some of the stony pyramids of Glencoe, but *only* its form, the surface being covered with green pasturage. Sometimes, in the course of the morning, we had been reminded of our own country ; but transiently, and never without a sense of characteristic difference. Many of the distinctions favourable to Switzerland I have noticed ; and it seems as if I were ungrateful to our own pellucid lakes, those darlings of the summer breezes ! But when floating on the Lake of Thun we did not forget them. The greenish hue of its waters is much less pleasing than the cerulean or purple of the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland ; the reflections are less vivid ; shore and water do not so delicately blend together ; hence a coasting voyage cannot be accompanied with an equal variety of minute objects. And I might add many other little circumstances or incidents that enliven the banks of our lakes. For instance, in a summer forenoon, the troops of cattle that are seen solacing themselves in the cool waters within the belt of a pebbly shore ; or, if the season do not drive them thither, how they beautify the pastures, and rocky unenclosed grounds ! While on the Lake of Thun we did not see a single group of cattle of any kind. I have not spoken of that *other* sky, ‘received into the bosom’ of our lakes, on tranquil summer evenings ; for the time of day prevented our being reminded in the same degree of what we have so often beheld at such times ; but it is obvious that, though the reflections from *masses* of brilliant clouds must often be very grand, the clouds in their delicate hues and forms cannot be seen, in the same soft distinctness, ‘bedded in another sky.’ . . .

In this pleasing valley we whirled away, again (as to the first sound of a Frenchman's whip in the streets of Calais) as blithe as children; when all at once, looking through a narrow opening of green and craggy mountains, the Jungfrau (the Virgin) burst upon our view, dazzling in brightness, which seemed rather heightened than diminished by a mantle of white clouds floating over the bosom of the mountain. The effect was indescribable. We had before seen the snows of the Alps at a distance, propped, as I may say, against the sky, or blending with, and often indistinguishable from it; and now, with the suddenness of a pantomimic change, we beheld a great mountain of snow, very near to us as it appeared, and in combination with hills covered with flourishing trees, in the pride of summer foliage. Our mirth was checked; and, awe-struck yet delighted, we stopped the car for some minutes.

Soon after we discovered the town of Unterseen, which stands right under the hill, and close to the river Aar. . . . At the end of the town we came to a bridge which we were to pass over; and here, almost as suddenly was the river Aar presented to our view as the maiden-mountain in her resplendent garb had been before. Hitherto the river had been concealed by, or only partially seen through, the trees; but at Unterseen it is imperious, and will be heard, seen, and felt. In a fit of rage it tumbles over a craggy channel, spreading out and dividing into different streams, crossed by the long, ponderous wooden bridge, that, steady and rugged, adds to the wild grandeur of the spectacle. . . . I recollect one woody eminence far below us, about which we doubted whether the object on its summit was rock or castle, and the point remained undecided until, on our way to Lauterbrunnen, we saw the same above our heads, on its perpendicular steep, a craggy barrier fitted to war with the tempests of ten thousand years. . . . The brilliance had deserted all but the highest mountains. They presented a spectacle of heavenly glory;

and long did we linger after the rosy lights had passed away from their summits, and taken a station in the calm sky above them.* It was ten o'clock when we reached the inn.

Brienzen, Wednesday, August 9th.— . . . There was something in the exterior of the people belonging to the inn at Brienzen that reminded one of the ferry-houses in the Highlands—a sort of untamed familiarity with strangers, and an expression of savage fearlessness in danger. . . . The shore of Brienzen, as far as we saw it, is much richer in intricate graces than the shores of the Lake of Thun. Its little retiring bays and shaggy rocks reminded me sometimes of Loch Ketterine.

Interlachen, Thursday, August 10th.—Many a streamlet crossed our way, after tumbling down the hills—sometimes as clear as the springs of our Westmoreland mountains, but the instant they touched the glacier river of the valley their pure spirit was lost—annihilated by its angry waters. I have seen a muddy and a transparent streamlet at a few yards distance hurrying down the same steep; in one instance the two joined at the bottom, travelled side by side in the same track, remaining distinct though joined together, as if each were jealous of its own character. Yielding to mild necessity, they slowly blended, ere both, in turbulent disrespect, were swallowed up by the master torrent.

Again we heard the thunder of avalanches, and saw them bursting out, fresh foaming springs. The sound is loud as thunder, but more metallic and musical. It also may be likened to the rattling of innumerable chariots passing over rocky places. . . . Soon the vale lay before us, with its two

* After the sunshine has left the mountain-tops the sky frequently becomes brighter, and of the same hue as if the light from the hills had retreated thither.

glaciers, and—as it might seem—its thousand cabins sown upon the steeps. The descent * became so precipitous that all were obliged to walk. Deep we go into the broad cradle-valley, every cottage we passed had its small garden, and cherry-trees sprinkled with leaves, bearing half-grown, half-ripe fruit. In plunging into this vale I was overcome with a sense of melancholy pervading the whole scene—not desolation, or dreariness. It is not the melancholy of the Scotch Highlands, but connected with social life in loneliness, not less than with the strife of all the seasons. . . . The sunshine had long deserted the valley, and was quitting the summits of the mountains behind the village; but red hues, dark as the red of rubies, settled in the clouds, and lingered there after the mountains had lost all but their cold whiteness, and the black hue of the crags. The gloomy grandeur of this spectacle harmonised with the melancholy of the vale; yet it was *heavenly glory* that hung over those cold mountains.

Grindelwald, Friday, August 11th.—Scheidegg to Meiringen.—To our right, looking over the green cradle of the vale, we saw the glacier, with the stream issuing from beneath an arch of solid ice—the small pyramids around it of a greyish colour, mingled with vitriol green. The bed of icy snow above looked sullied, so that the glacier itself was not beautiful, like what we had read of; but the mass of mountains behind, their black crags and shadows, and the awful aspect of winter encroaching on the valley-domain (combinations so new to us) made ample amends for any disappointment we might feel. . . . The rain came on in heavy drops, but did not drive us to the closer shelter of the house. We heeded not the sprinkling which a gust of wind sometimes sent in upon us. Good fortune had hitherto favoured us; and, even if we had been detained at that house

* From the Wengern Alp.

all night, the inconvenience would have been trifling. Our spirits were uplifted, and we felt as if it would be a privilege to be admitted to a near acquaintance with Alpine storms. This at least was my feeling, till the threatenings were over; and then, by happy transition, I gladly hailed the bursting light of the sun that flashed upon the crags, seen by glimpses between the dispersing clouds. The interior of the house was roomy and warm; and, though the floors were of the bare soil, everything looked cleanly; the wooden vessels were pretty, ladles and spoons curiously carved, and all neatly arranged on shelves. Three generations, making a numerous family, were there living together in the summer season, with their cattle on the rough pastures round them: * no doubt the main support of the household, but the gains from travellers must be considerable. We were surprised at being asked if we chose coffee. Hardly should we have deserved our welcome shelter had we not preferred the peasant's fare—cheese, milk, and cream, with the addition of bread fetched from the vale; and I must not omit a dish of fruit—bilberries—here very fine. Indeed most of our mountain plants, except the branchy fern and the common daisy (which we rarely saw), grow in lavish beauty, and many others unknown to us, that enamel the turf like gems. The monkshood of our gardens, growing at a great height on the Alps, has a brighter hue than elsewhere. It is seen in tufts, that to my fancy presented fairy groves upon the green grass, and in rocky places, or under trees.

The storm over, we proceeded, still in the forest, which led us through different compartments of the vale, each of itself a little valley of the loveliest greenness, on all sides skirted with pine-trees, and often sprinkled with huts, the summer dwellings

* All these Alps are occupied by owners of land in the valleys, who have a right in common according to the quantity of their land. The cheeses, like the rest of the produce, are the property of all, and the distribution takes place at the end of the season.

of the herdsmen. Sometimes (seen through a lateral opening) a meadow glade, not much larger than a calf-garth, would have its single dwelling; but the memory of one particular spot—the perfect image of peace and pastoral seclusion—remains with me as vividly as when, apart from my companions, I travelled over its soft carpet of turf. That valley-reach might be in length a quarter of a mile or more, and of proportionate width, surrounded by hills covered with pines, overtopped by craggy mountains. It was an apparently level plain, as smooth as velvet, and our course through the centre. On our right flowed the grey stream from the glaciers, with chastened voice and motion; and, on the other, were many cabins in an almost formal line, separated from each other, and elevated upon wooden pillars, the grass growing round and under them. There was not a sound except of the gushing stream; no cattle to be seen, nor any living creature.

Our way continued through interchange of pastoral and forest ground. Crossed a bridge, and then had the stream to our left in a rocky gulf overhung with trees, chiefly beeches and elms; sawing-mills on the river very picturesque. It is impossible to imagine a more beautiful descent than was before us to the vale of Hasli. The roaring stream was our companion: sometimes we looked down upon it from the edge of a lofty precipice; sometimes descended towards it, and could trace its furious course for a considerable way. The torrent bounded over rocks, and still went foaming on, no pausing-places, no gentle windings, no pools under the innumerable smaller cataracts; the substance and the grey hue still the same, whether the stream rushed in one impetuous current down a regularly rough part of its steep channel, or laboured among rocks in cloud-shaped heavings, or in boisterous fermentation. . . . We saw the cataract * through an open window. It is a

* The Fall of the Reichenbach.

tremendous one, but, wanting the accompaniments of overhanging trees, and all the minor graces which surround our waterfalls—overgrowings of lichen, moss, fern, and flowers—it gives little of what may be called pleasure. It was astonishment and awe—an overwhelming sense of the powers of nature for the destruction of all things, and of the helplessness of man—of the weakness of his will if prompted to make a momentary effort against such a force. What weight and speed of waters! and what a tossing of grey mist! Though at a considerable distance from the fall, when standing at the window, a shower of misty rain blew upon us.

Meiringen, Saturday, August 12th.—Again crossed the river; then up a bare precipice, and along a gallery hewn out of the rock. Downwards to the valley more bare and open; a sprinkling of pines, among which the peasants were making hay. Hamlets and single huts not far asunder: no thought of dreariness crossed my mind; yet a pensiveness was spread over the long valley, where, year by year, the same simple employments go on in succession, and where the tempests of winter are patiently endured, and thoughtfully guarded against. . . . The *châlet* at Handek is large; four long apartments, in one of which our mules rested. Several men were living there for the summer season, but no women. They served us with the same kindliness we had experienced on the Wengern and Scheidegg Alps, but with slowness and gravity. These men were very tall, and had a sedate deportment, generally noticed I find by travellers in Ober Hasli, where the race has for centuries been distinguished by peculiar customs, manners, and habits. . . . From the brink of a rock we looked down the falls, and along the course of the torrent. The spectacle was tremendous, and, from that point, not less beautiful. The position of the sun here favoured us; and we beheld the arch of a bright rainbow, steadily poised on the cloud of vapour

below us that burst out of the terrific waters. We looked down with awe upon

the river, throwing
His giant body o'er the steep rock's brink,

yet, at first, hardly without personal fear. The noise was so great we could not help fancying it shook the very rock on which we stood. That feeling passed away. . . . While I lay on my bed, the terrible solitudes of the Wetterhorn were revealed to me by fits—its black chasms, and snowy, dark, grey summits. All night, and all day, and for ever, the vale of Meiringen is sounding with torrents.

Meiringen, Sunday, August 13th.—Rain over, and the storm past away, long before the sunshine had touched the top of any other mountain, the snow upon the Wetterhorn shone like silver, and its grey adamantine towers appeared in a soft splendour all their own. I looked in vain for the rosy tints of morning, of which I had so often heard; but they could not have been more beautiful than the silvery brightness. . . .

Lake of Lungern.—At an upper window of one of a cluster of houses at the foot of the valley, a middle-aged man, with a long beard, was kneeling with a book in his hand. He fixed his eyes upon us, and, while his devotions were still going on, made me a bow. I passed slowly, and looked into that house with prying eyes, it was so different from any other, and so much handsomer. The wooden ceiling of the room, where the friar or monk (such I suppose him to be) knelt at his prayers, was curiously inlaid and carved, and the walls hung with pictures. The picturesque accompaniments of the Roman Catholic religion, the elegant white chapels on the hills, the steady grave people going to church, and the cheerfulness of the valley, had put me into good humour with the religion itself; but, while we were pass-

ing through this very hamlet, and close to the mansion of the godly man, Mr. M. having lost the cork of a little flask, I asked the guide to buy or beg for us another at one of the cottages, and he shook his head, assuring me they would neither give nor sell anything to us Protestants, except in the regular way of trade. They would do nothing for us out of good-will. I had been too happy in passing through the tranquil valley to be ready to trust my informer, and, having first obliged him to make the request, I asked myself at two respectable houses, and met with a refusal, and no very gracious looks. . . .

Engelberg, Mount Titlis, Tuesday, August 15th.—We breakfasted in view of the flashing, silver-topped Mount Titlis, and its grey crags, a sight that roused William's youthful desires; and in spite of weak eyes, and the weight of fifty winters, he could not repress a longing to ascend that mountain. . . . But my brother had had his own visions of glory, and, had he been twenty years younger, sure I am that he would have trod the summit of the Titlis. Soon after breakfast we were warned to expect the procession, and saw it issuing from the church. Priests in their white robes, choristers, monks chanting the service, banners uplifted, and a full-dressed image of the Virgin carried aloft. The people were divided into several classes; the men, bare-headed; and maidens, taking precedence of the married women, I suppose, because it was the festival of the Virgin. The procession formed a beautiful stream upon the green level, winding round the church and convent. Thirteen hundred people were assembled at Engelberg, and joined in this service. The unmarried women wore straw hats, ornamented with flowers, white bodices, and crimson petticoats. The dresses of the elder people were curious. What a display of neck-chains and ear-rings! of silver and brocaded stomachers! Some old men had coats after the

mode of the time of *The Spectator*, with worked seams. Boys, and even young men, wore flowers in their straw hats. We entered the convent; but were only suffered to go up a number of staircases, and through long whitewashed galleries, hung with portraits of saints, and prints of remarkable places in Switzerland, and particularly of the vale and convent of Engelberg, with plans and charts of the mountains, etc. There are now only eighteen monks; and the abbot no longer exists: his office, I suppose, became extinct with his temporal principedom. . . . I strolled to the chapel, near the inn, a pretty white edifice, entered by a long flight of steps. No priest, but several young peasants, in shepherdess attire of jackets, and showy petticoats, and flowery hats, were paying their vows to the Virgin. A colony of swallows had built their nests within the cupola, in the centre of the circular roof. They were flying overhead; and their voices seemed to me an harmonious accompaniment to the silent devotions of those rustics.

Lucerne, Wednesday, August 16th.—Lucerne stands close to the shore at the foot of the lake of the four cantons. The river Reuss, after its passage from the mountain of St. Gothard, falls into that branch called the Lake of Uri, and issues out of another branch at Lucerne, passing through the town. The river has three long wooden bridges; and another bridge, 1080 feet in length, called the Cathedral Bridge, crosses a part of the lake, and leads to the Cathedral. Thither we repaired, having first walked the streets, and purchased a straw hat for 12 francs, at the shop of a pleasant talkative milliner, on whose counter, taking up a small pamphlet (a German magazine), we were surprised at opening upon our own name, and, still more, surprised to find it in connection with my brother's poem on the Duddon, so recently published.

But I was going to lead you to the end of the long bridge

under a dark roof of wood, crossed and sustained by heavy beams, on each of which, on both sides—so that they face you both in going and returning—some portion of Scripture history is represented; beginning with Adam and Eve, and ending with the resurrection and ascension of Christ. These pictures, to the number of 230—though, to be sure, woful things as works of art—are by no means despicable daubs; and, while I looked at them myself, it pleased me much more to see the peasants, bringing their burthens to the city, often stay their steps, with eyes cast upwards. The lake is seen through the openings of the bridge; pleasant houses, not crowded, on its green banks. . . . It was dark when we reached the inn. We took tea at one end of the unoccupied side of the table in the *salle-à-manger*; while, on the other side, a large party were at supper. Before we had finished, a bustle at the door drew our attention to a traveller; rather an odd figure appeared in a greatcoat. Mary said, ‘He is like Mr. Robinson.’ He turned round while talking German, with loud voice, to the landlord; and, all at once, we saw that it was Mr. Robinson himself. Our joy cannot be expressed. If he had brought the half of old England along with him, we could not have been more glad. We started up with one consent; and, no doubt, all operations at the supper-table were suspended; but we had no eyes for that. Mr. Robinson introduced two young men, his companions, an American and a Scotchman—genteel, modest youths, who (the ceremony of introduction over) slipped away to the supper-table, wishing to leave us to ourselves. We were indeed happy—and Mr. Robinson was not less so. He seemed as if he had in one moment found two homes, his English home, and his home in Germany, though it were in the heart of Switzerland.”

During this tour on the Continent, Wordsworth wrote to the Earl of Lonsdale from Lucerne, on August 19th. He first

described their route through Belgium and Germany. Of Heidelberg he said: "A noble situation at the point where the Neckar issues from steep lofty hills into the plain of the Rhine." Of their journey in the *Bernese Oberland* he said:—

"This journey led us over high ground, and for fifteen leagues along the base of the loftiest Alps, which reared their bare or snow-clad ridges and pikes, in a clear atmosphere, with fleecy clouds now and then settling upon and gathering round them. We heard and saw several avalanches; they are announced by a sound like thunder, but more metallic and musical. This warning naturally makes one look about, and we had the gratification of seeing one falling, in the shape and appearance of a torrent or cascade of foaming water, down the deep-worn crevices of the steep or perpendicular granite mountains. Nothing can be more awful than the sound of these cataracts of ice and snow thus descending, unless it be the silence which succeeds. The elevations from which we beheld these operations of nature, and saw such an immense range of primitive mountains stretching to the east and west, were covered with rich pasturage and beautiful flowers, among which was an abundance of the monkshood, a flower which I had never seen but in the trim borders of our gardens, and which here grew not so much in patches as in little woods or forests, towering above the other plants. At this season the herdsmen are with their cattle in still higher regions than those which we have trod, the herbage where we travelled being reserved till they descend in the autumn.

We have visited the Abbey of Engelberg, not many leagues from the borders of the Lake of Lucerne. The tradition is, that the site of the abbey was appointed by angels, singing from a lofty mountain that rises from the plain of the valley, and which, from having been thus honoured, is called Engelberg, or the Hill of the Angels. It is a glorious position for such beings, and I should have thought myself repaid for the

trouble of so long a journey by the impression made upon my mind, when I first came in view of the vale in which the Convent is placed, and of the mountains that enclose it. The light of the sun had left the valley, and the deep shadows spread over it heightened the splendour of the evening light, and spread upon the surrounding mountains, some of which had their summits covered with pure snow; others were half hidden by vapours rolling round them; and the rock of Engelberg could not have been seen under more fortunate circumstances, for masses of cloud glowing with the reflection of the rays of the setting sun were hovering round it, like choirs of spirits preparing to settle upon its venerable head.

To-day we quit this place to ascend the mountain Righi."

He asked Lord Lonsdale to write to him to Berne, where he hoped to be five weeks later; . . . "and may I beg that you will not omit to mention Westmoreland politics."

On the 7th October he again wrote to Lord Lonsdale from Paris, and gave an account of their subsequent wanderings in Switzerland, Italy, and France. Of Paris he said:—"Nothing which I have seen in this city has interested me at all like the Jardin des Plantes, with the living animals, and the Museum of Natural History which it includes. Scarcely could I refrain from tears of admiration at the sight of this apparently boundless exhibition of the wonders of the creation. The statues and pictures of the Louvre affect me feebly in comparison. The exterior of Paris is much changed since I last visited it in 1792. I miss many ancient buildings, particularly the Temple, where the poor king and his family were so long confined. That memorable spot, where the Jacobin Club was held, has also disappeared. Nor are the additional buildings always improvements; the Pont des Arts, in particular, injures the view from the Pont Neuf greatly; but in these things public convenience is the main point. . . . "

Reference must be made to vol. vi. of this work for other extracts from Dorothy Wordsworth's Journal of the Tour across the Alps into Italy, and back to Switzerland, returning to England by Paris, as well as for partial extracts from Mrs. Wordsworth's Journal, and the Memorial Poems themselves.

On their return to England, they spent some time in London. On the 18th November, H. C. Robinson writes:—

“Wordsworth in excellent mood. His improved and improving mildness and tolerance must very much conciliate all who know him.

Monday, 20.—I was glad to accompany the Wordsworths to the British Museum; and we had but a hurried survey of the antiquities. I did not perceive that Wordsworth enjoyed the Elgin Marbles much, but he is a still man, when he does enjoy himself, and by no means ready to talk of his pleasures, except to his sister. We could hardly see the statues. The Memnon, however, seemed to interest him very much. I think that his enjoyment of works of art is very much in proportion to their subserviency to poetical illustration. I doubt whether he feels the beauty of mere form.”

During Wordsworth's Tour on the Continent his brother Christopher was promoted from the Rectory of Lambeth to the Mastership of Trinity College, Cambridge. On his return the poet remained a fortnight in London—November 9th to 23d; and during that time he saw Coleridge, the Lambs, Moore, Rogers, Kenyon, Talfourd, Sharp, and many others. It was a time of much and varied literary fellowship. The following are some of Thomas Moore's reminiscences of Wordsworth. They exhibit him alike in his weakness and his strength. His complaint of Bryon's plagiarism—however true—was unworthy of Wordsworth; but his remarks on the slight knowledge of poetry that existed amongst the public “men of the time,” and

the causes of it, were perhaps more true than was understood by Moore, who reported them.

"October 23d, 1820.* . . . Lady Mary told me that Wordsworth, who has returned within the last fortnight from Switzerland and Milan, was making inquiries after me, and wished to see me.

October 24th, 1820. . . . Called upon Wordsworth. A young Frenchman came in, and it was amusing to hear him and Wordsworth at cross purposes upon the subject of *Athalie*; Wordsworth saying he did not wish to see it acted, as it would never come up to the high imagination he had formed in reading it, of the prophetic inspiration of the priests, etc., etc.; and the Frenchman insisting that in acting alone could it be properly enjoyed—that is to say, in the manner it was acted *now*; for he acknowledged that till the *corps de ballet* came to its aid, it was very dull, even on the stage,—*une action morte*. . . .

25th October 1820. . . . Wordsworth rather dull. I see he is a man . . . who does not understand the *give and take* of conversation.

27th October 1820.—Wordsworth came at half-past eight, and stopped to breakfast. Talked a good deal. Spoke of Byron's plagiarism from him; the whole third canto of *Childe Harold* founded on his style and sentiments. The feeling of natural objects which is there expressed, not caught by B. from nature herself, but from him (Wordsworth), and spoiled in the transmission. *Tintern Abbey* the source of it all; from which same poem too the celebrated passage about Solitude, in the first canto of *Childe Harold*, is (he said) taken, with this difference, that what is naturally expressed by him, has been worked by Bryon into a laboured and antithetical sort of

* *Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence of Thomas Moore*. Edited by the Right Hon. Lord John Russell, M.P.

declamation. Spoke of the Scottish novels. Is sure they are Scott's. When I mentioned the abundance of them, as being rather too great for one man to produce, he said that great fertility was the characteristic of all novelists and story-tellers. Richardson could have gone on for ever; his *Sir Charles Grandison* was, originally, in thirty volumes. Instanced Charlotte Smith, Madame Cottin, etc. etc. Scott, since he was a child, accustomed to legends, and to the exercise of the story-telling faculty, sees nothing to stop him as long as he can hold a pen. Spoke of the very little real knowledge of poetry that existed now; so few men had time to study. For instance, Mr. Canning; one could hardly select a cleverer man; and yet, what did Mr. Canning know of poetry? what time had he, in the busy political life he had led, to study Dante, Homer, etc., as they ought to be studied, in order to arrive at the true principles of taste in works of genius. Mr. Fox, indeed, towards the latter part of his life, made leisure for himself, and took to improving his mind; and, accordingly, all his later public displays bore a greater stamp of wisdom and good taste than his early ones. Mr. Burke alone was an exception to this description of public men: by far the greatest man of his age; not only abounding in knowledge himself, but feeding, in various directions, his most able contemporaries; assisting Adam Smith in his *Political Economy*, and Reynolds in his *Lectures on Painting*. Fox, too, who acknowledged that all he had ever learned from books was nothing to what he had derived from Burke.* I walked with Wordsworth to the Tuileries: he goes off to-morrow."

In the *Letters, Conversations, and Recollections of S. T. Coleridge*, published anonymously in 1836, but edited by T. Allsop, there are some interesting allusions to Wordsworth

* "There is much justice in these remarks of Mr. Wordsworth," adds Lord John Russell, the editor of Moore's *Journal*.

about this time. Few of the dates of the incidents mentioned are given; but in Allsop's twenty-seventh letter (dated May 4, 1821) he writes thus of meeting Wordsworth in London:—

“Met Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth, with Mr. Talfourd, Monkhouse, and Robinson. A very delightful evening. Wordsworth almost as good a reader as Coleridge; to a stranger I think he would seem to carry even more authority, both in what he read and said. He spoke of Southey and Coleridge with measured respect, and, as I thought, just appreciation. Pointed out some passages in *The Curse of Kehama* which he admired, and repeated some portions of *The Ancient Mariner*; also from *The River Duddon* and *The Excursion*. Repeated *The Highland Girl*. He seemed to me to present the idea of a poet in whom the repressive faculty was predominant. Taken altogether, he impressed me very favourably, and I regret deeply that I did not avail myself of subsequent opportunities—not seldom proffered by Lamb and Coleridge—of meeting him more frequently. But I then laboured under the impression that he had not acted kindly to that dear and loved being, whom I loved living, and honour dead. Even now, when myself almost indifferent to new associations, I regret this enforced denial of what at that period would have enhanced the value of existence, communion with that glorious and effulgent mind; but I do not regret the impulses which led to this self-denial.” *

In the same letter Allsop tells us that he “once wrote to Wordsworth to inquire if he was really a Christian. He † replied, ‘When I am a good man, *then* I am a Christian.’” It would be interesting to recover the letter in which this remark was made.

In his last letter, No. 45, Allsop represents Coleridge as saying :†—

* Vol. i. pp. 222, 223.

† Vol. ii. p. 238.

“Of all the men I ever knew, Wordsworth has the least femineity in his mind. He is *all man*. He is a man of whom it might have been said, ‘It is good for him to be alone.’”

When Mr. Allsop says of Coleridge that *his* mind was “at once the most masculine, feminine, and yet child-like (and in that case the most innocent) which it is possible to imagine,” the value of his diagnosis may be guessed. Nevertheless he may have accurately reported Coleridge’s remark on Wordsworth, which has a certain truth underneath it.

After his fortnight in London, Wordsworth went down with his wife to Cambridge, where they spent thirteen days at the Lodge, Trinity College (November 24 to December 6). From Cambridge Wordsworth wrote thus to Lord Lonsdale:—

“*Master’s Lodge, Trinity College, Cambridge,*
4th December 1820.”

“ . . . I am much gratified with what I have seen of this University. There is a great ardour of study among the young men. The masters, tutors, and lecturers appear for the most part to be very zealous in the discharge of their duties. . . .”

Cambridge seems to have inspired Wordsworth to sonnet-writing in December of this year, just as Oxford had inspired him in the month of May. I infer, from a letter to Robinson, that one of the three fine sonnets—afterwards included in the Ecclesiastical series—on the *Inside of King’s College Chapel, Cambridge*, was composed during this visit. In a letter dated March 13, 1821, he says of his time at Cambridge:—

“What with the company (although I saw very little of him) of my dear brother, our stately apartments, with all the

venerable portraits there that awe one into humility, old friends, new acquaintances, and a thousand familiar remembrances, and freshly conjured-up recollections, I enjoyed myself not a little. I should like to send you a sonnet composed at Cambridge,* but it is reserved for cogent reasons—to be imparted in due time.”

From Cambridge William and Mary Wordsworth went down to the Beaumonts at Coleorton. They stayed there from December 2d to December 20th, and then went north by Manchester and Kendal to Rydal.

After her return from the Continent, Dorothy Wordsworth seems to have gone direct from London to the Clarksons at Playford Hall, near Ipswich, where her nephew William was residing. She joined that nephew at Cambridge before the end of his Christmas holidays, and left Cambridge for Rydal about the 26th January 1821.

* It is possible that this sonnet may have been that which he afterwards named *Recollection of the Portrait of King Henry VIII., Trinity College, Cambridge*. See vol. vii. p. 101.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ECCLESIASTICAL SKETCHES—TOUR IN SCOTLAND AND BELGIUM— CORRESPONDENCE, 1821-1824.

DURING Wordsworth's residence in Leicestershire, in December 1820, Sir George Beaumont—who was about to build a new church on Coleorton Moor—talked a good deal to him about the ecclesiastical history of England. This led not only to his writing some sonnets on the subject while staying at Coleorton, but to the larger idea of embodying the entire story of the Anglican Church in a series of *Ecclesiastical Sketches*. His mind had been turned to Church questions for many years. He had discussed them with his brother Christopher, who, while dean and rector of Bocking, had published six volumes of *Ecclesiastical Biography*, and, as he explained in a note to the *Sketches* when first published, "the Catholic question, which was agitated in Parliament about that time, kept my thoughts in the same course." Southey wrote to his friend, C. H. Townsend, from Keswick, on the 6th of May 1821:—

"The Wordsworths spoke of you with great pleasure upon their return from Cambridge. He was with us lately. His thoughts and mine have for some time unconsciously been travelling in the same direction; for while I have been sketching a brief history of the English Church, and the systems which it has subdued or struggled with, he has been pursuing precisely the same subject in a series of sonnets, to which my volume will serve for a commentary, as completely as if it had been written with that intent." *

* Southey's *Life and Correspondence*, vol. v. p. 79; also a letter to C. Bedford, vol. v. p. 65.

Several of Wordsworth's letters written at this time to Viscount Lowther—the son of the Earl of Lonsdale—reveal his opinions on the question of the admission of Roman Catholics to Parliament, and kindred matters :—

“ *March 28th, 1821.*

“. . . I am truly sorry for what you say about the probable fate of the Catholic question, and feel grateful to you as an Englishman for your persevering exertions. Canning's speech, as given in the *Morning Chronicle* and *Courier*, is a tissue of glittering declamation and slender sophistry. He does not appear to look at the effect of this measure upon the Dissenters at all ; and as to the inference that the Catholics will be quiet when possessed of their object, because they have been patient under their long privation, first, we may deny the premises—has not every concession been employed as a vantage-ground for another attack ? and, had it been otherwise, is it true that they have been patient ? What says History as to the long enduring quiet of men who have an object in view ? The grandees of the Puritans, says Heylin in his life of Archbishop Laud, after the first heats were over in Queen Elizabeth's time, carried their work for *thirty* years together, like moles under the ground, not casting up any earth before them, till they had made so strong a party in the House of Commons as was able to hold the thing to their own conditions. Mr. Canning finds the Catholic Peers supporters of Episcopacy in Charles First's time, and concludes, therefore, that they were friends to the Church of England, because Bishops make a part of its constitution. Would it not have been more consonant to history to ascribe this care of reformed bishoprics to the love of an institution favourable to that exaltation of religion, by which abuses were produced, that wrought the overthrow of Papacy in England, and to some lurking expectations that if the Sees

could be preserved, they might not improbably be filled at no distant time by Catholic prelates. . . .”

Two other (undated) letters evidently belong to the same year :—

“ . . . I have read with the utmost attention the debates on the Catholic question. The opinion I share with you remains unaltered. We have heard much of candour and forbearance, etc., but these qualities appear to be all on one side, viz. on that of the advocates of existing laws. Among the Innovators there is a haughtiness, an air of insolent superiority to light and knowledge, which no strength of argument could justify, much less the sophisms and assumptions which they advance. I am aware that if the Catholics are to get into Parliament, ambition and worldly interest will have keen sway over them as over other men ; and it need not be dreaded, therefore, that they will all be, upon every occasion, upon one side. But still the *esprit de corps* cannot but be stronger with them than other bodies for obvious reasons ; and looking at the constitution of the House, how nicely balanced parties have often been, and what small majorities have repeatedly decided most momentous questions, I cannot but tremble at the prospect of introducing men who *may* turn, and (if they act consistently with the spirit of their religion, and even with its open professions) *must* turn their mutual fidelity against our Protestant Establishment, till, in co-operation with other dissenters and infidels, they have accomplished its overthrow. . . .

. . . The Catholic claims are to be referred to a committee ! God grant that these people may be baffled ! How Mr. Canning and other enemies to Reform in Parliament can, without gross inconsistency, be favourers of their cause, I am unable to conceive. Mr. Canning objects to reform because it would

be the means of sending into the House of Commons members whose station, opinions, and sentiments differ from those of the persons who are now elected, and who would prove less friendly to the Constitution in Church and State. Good heavens! and won't this be the case to a most formidable extent if you admit Catholics, a measure to be followed up—as it inevitably will, sooner or later—with the abolition of the Test and Corporation Acts, and a proportional increase of the political power of the dissenters, who are to a man hostile to the Church. . . .”

Another letter, written at the close of the same year, to his friend Loch, shows how Wordsworth's views on many questions underwent consistent change, and were developed by the progress of events, both in England and abroad. It is a specially interesting letter:—

“*Rydal Mount, Dec. 4, 1821.*

. . . “I should think that I had lived to little purpose if my notions on the subject of government had undergone no modification. My youth must, in that case, have been without enthusiasm, and my manhood endued with small capability of profiting by reflection. If I were addressing those who have dealt so liberally with the words renegade, apostate, etc., I should retort the charge upon them, and say, *you* have been deluded by *places* and *persons*, while I have stuck to *principles*. *I* abandoned France, and her rulers, when *they* abandoned the struggle for liberty, gave themselves up to tyranny, and endeavoured to enslave the world. I disapproved of the war against France at its commencement, thinking—which was perhaps an error—that it might have been avoided; but after Buonaparte had violated the independence of Switzerland, my heart turned against him, and against the nation that could submit to be the instrument of such an outrage. Here it was that I parted, in feeling, from the Whigs, and to a certain degree united with their adversaries, who were free from the

delusion (such I must ever regard it) of Mr. Fox and his party, that a safe and honourable peace was practicable with the French nation, and that an ambitious conqueror like Buonaparte could be softened down into a commercial rival.

This is enough for foreign politics, as influencing my attachments.

There are three great domestic questions, viz. the Liberty of the Press, Parliamentary Reform, and Roman Catholic concession, which, if I briefly advert to, no more need be said at present.

A free discussion of public measures through the press I deem the *only* safeguard of liberty: without it I have neither confidence in kings, parliaments, judges, or divines. They have all in their turn betrayed their country. But the press, so potent for good, is scarcely less so for evil; and unfortunately they who are misled and abused by its means are the persons whom it can least benefit. It is the fatal characteristic of their disease to reject all remedies coming from the quarter that has caused or aggravated the malady. I am *therefore* for vigorous restrictions; but there is scarcely any abuse that I would not endure, rather than sacrifice—or even endanger—this freedom.

When I was young—giving myself credit for qualities which I did not possess, and measuring mankind by that standard—I thought it derogatory to human nature to set up property in preference to person, as a title for legislative power. That notion has vanished. I now perceive many advantages in our present complex system of representation, which formerly eluded my observation. This has tempered my ardour for reform: but if any plan could be contrived for throwing the representation fairly into the hands of the property of the country, and not leaving it so much in the hands of the large proprietors as it now is, it should have my best support; though even in that event there would be a sacrifice of personal

rights, independent of property, that are now frequently exercised for the benefit of the community.

Be not startled when I say that I am averse to further concessions to the Roman Catholics. My reasons are, that such concessions will not produce harmony among the Roman Catholics themselves; that those among them who are most clamorous for the measure care little about it but as a step, first, to the overthrow of the Protestant Establishment in Ireland, as introductory to a separation of the two countries—their ultimate aim. . . . Deeming the Church Establishment not only a fundamental part of our Constitution, but one of the greatest upholders and propagators of Civilisation in our own country, and, lastly, the most effectual and main support of religious Toleration, I cannot but look with jealousy upon measures which must reduce her relative influence, unless they be accompanied with arrangements, more adequate than any yet adopted, for the preservation and increase of that influence, to keep pace with the other powers in the community.”

A sentence from an undated letter to Wrangham (probably belonging to the same year) is instructive. He had been speaking of the efforts of a Society to distribute copies of the Christian Scriptures, which he cordially approved of, but he added: “As to the *indirect* benefits expected from it, as producing a golden age of unanimity among Christians, all that I think fume and emptiness; nay, far worse. So deeply am I persuaded that discord and artifice, and pride and ambition would be fostered, by such an approximation and unnatural alliance of sects, that I am inclined to think the evil thus produced would more than outweigh the good done by dispersing the Bibles.”

A letter to his friend Richard Sharp, written in April 1822, shows Wordsworth's own estimate both of the *Ecclesiastical Sketches* and of the *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent*.

“ Rydal Mount, April 16,
[Post-mark 1822].

“ MY DEAR SIR,—I took the liberty of sending you the *Memorials*, for everything of this sort *is* a liberty (inasmuch as, to use Gibbon’s phrase, it levies a tax of civility upon the receiving party), as a small acknowledgment of the great advantage I and my fellow-travellers had derived from your directions; which—as you might observe by the order in which the Poems are placed, and the limits of our Tour—we almost literally followed. The *Ecclesiastical Sketches* were offered to your notice merely as a contemporary publication. It gratifies me that you think well of these poems; but, I own, I am disappointed that they should have afforded you less pleasure than a single piece, which, from the very nature of it, as allegorical, and even imperfectly so, would horrify a German critic; and, whatever may be thought of the Germans as poets, there is no doubt of their being the best critics in Europe. But I think I have hit upon the secret. You, like myself, are—as Smollett says in his translation of the French phrase—no longer a chicken; and your heart beat in recollection of your late glorious performance, which has ranked you as a demigod among tourists—

Mounting from glorious deed to deed,
As thou from clime to clime didst lead.

You recollect that Gray, in one of his letters, affirms that Description—he means of natural scenery and the operations of Nature—though an admirable ornament, ought *never* to be the subject of Poetry. How many exclusive dogmas have been laid down, which genius from age to age has triumphantly refuted! and grossly should I be deceived if, speaking freely to you as an old friend, these local poems do not contain many proofs that Gray was as much in the wrong in this interdict,

as any critical brother, who may have framed his canons without a spark of inspiration or poetry to guide him. . . .

The *Ecclesiastical Sketches* labour under one obvious disadvantage, that they can only present themselves as a whole to the reader, who is pretty well acquainted with the history of this country; and, as separate pieces, several of them suffer as Poetry from the matter of fact; there being unavoidably in all History—except as it is a mere suggestion—something that enslaves the fancy. But there are in those Poems several continuous strains, not in the least degree liable to this objection. I will only mention two, the Sonnets on *The Dissolution of the Monasteries*, and almost the whole of the last part, from the picture of England after the Revolution, scattered over with Protestant Churches, till the conclusion. Pray, read again from ‘Open your Gates, ye everlasting Piles’ to the end, and then turn to your *Enterprise*.* Has the Continent driven the North out of your estimation? . . .

I have in the press a little book on the Lakes, containing some illustrative remarks on Swiss scenery. If I have fallen into any errors, I know no one better able to correct them than yourself, and should the book (which I must mention is chiefly a republication) meet your eye, pray, point out to me the mistakes. The part relating to Switzerland is new. One favour leads often to the asking of another. May I beg of you a sketch for a tour in North Wales? It is thirty years since I was in that country, and new ways must have been opened up since that time.”

The *Ecclesiastical Sketches* are, poetically, the least successful of all Wordsworth’s efforts, with the possible exception of his Tragedy; but his main occupation—during the winter of 1820 and the spring of 1821—was the completion of that long series

* An allegorical poem—the “glorious performance” referred to at the beginning of the letter.

of sonnets. While he was thus engaged, his wife and sister were as actively employed in writing out their notes of Continental travel.

In March 1821, Wordsworth told Crabb Robinson "the two ladies are busy in transcribing their Journals"; and the desire for fresh journeyings being strong within him, he wished that he could encourage the hope of passing a winter with Robinson at Rome. The expense, however, deterred him. He referred to Barry Cornwall's Tragedy, just published, and said, "It appears to me, in the present late age of the world, a most difficult task to construct a good tragedy, free from stale and mean contrivances, and animated by new and suitable characters; so that I am inclined to judge Cornwall gently, and sincerely rejoice in his success. As to poetry, I am sick of it; it overruns the country in all the shapes of the plagues of Egypt, frog-poets (the Croakers), mice-poets (the Nibblers), a class rhyming to mice (which shall be nameless), and fly-poets (Gray in his dignified way calls flies the 'Insect Youth,' a term wonderfully applicable upon this occasion). We shall not be accused of envying the rising generation."

In August of this year, Robinson being about to visit Scotland, Wordsworth gave him an introduction to Sir Walter Scott, in which he said:—

"Mr. R. is a highly-esteemed friend of myself, and of those who are dearest to me. Mr. R. has been much upon the Continent, and is extensively read in German literature, speaking the language with the ease of a native.

In the last letter I had from you, you spoke of the pleasure you should have in re-visiting our arcadia. I assure you that you would be most welcome; when I think how small is the space between your residence upon the Tweed, and mine in the valley of Ambleside, I wonder we see so little of each other."

While the ladies at Rydal Mount were engaged in copying out their Journals of the Tour of 1820, Mrs. Wordsworth wrote to John Kenyon :—

“ *Rydal Mount, December 28, 1821.*”

“ Miss Wordsworth is going on with her Journal, which will be ready to *go to press* interspersed with her brother's poems, I hope before you return. I do not say this *seriously*, but we sometimes jestingly talk of raising a fund by such means for a second and a further trip into Italy ! ”

On the 3d March 1822, Dorothy Wordsworth wrote to Crabb Robinson :—

“ With respect to the Tour poems, I am afraid you will think his notes not sufficiently copious. Prefaces he has none, except to the poem on Goddard's death. Your suggestion of the bridge at Lucern set his mind to work ; and, if a happy mood comes on, he is determined even yet, though the work is printed, to add a poem on that subject. You can have no idea with what earnest pleasure he seized the idea ; yet, before he began to write at all, when he was pondering over his recollections and asking me for hints and thoughts, I mentioned that very subject, and he then thought he could make nothing of it. You certainly have the gift of setting him on fire. When I named (before your letter was read to him) your scheme for next autumn, his countenance flushed with pleasure, and he exclaimed, ‘ I 'll go with him ’ ; and then I ventured to utter a thought which had risen before, and been suppressed in the moment of its rising, ‘ How I should like to go. ’ Presently, however, the conversation took a sober turn—my desires were completely checked—and he concluded that for him the journey would be impossible, ‘ And then, ’ said he, ‘ if you, or Mary, or both, were not with me I should not half enjoy it, and that (so soon again) is impossible. ’

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The transcript of my Journal is nearly finished. There is so much of it, that I am sure it will be dull reading to those who have never been in these countries,—and even to such, I think, much of it at least must be tedious. My brother is interested when I read it to him. . . . Mary seems to have succeeded so well in the brief way, that I can hardly hope my lengthiness will interest in like degree. I shall not read hers till my transcript is finished.”

Writing to the same friend in November 1825, she asked if he could procure two sets of “Swiss costumes,” to be bound up in the MS. Journal of this year. These were procured, and they are inserted in the two large quarto volumes in which Dorothy’s Journal is bound.

A letter of Wordsworth’s to Sir George Beaumont, belonging to an earlier date (Jan. 6, 1821), may be given here. It was written from Rydal:—

“6th Jan. 1821.

“MY DEAR SIR GEORGE,—Yesterday I performed a great feat—wrote no less than seven letters, reserving yours for to-day, that I might have more leisure, and you consequently less trouble in reading. I have been a good deal tossed about since our arrival here. Mrs. W. and I were first called away by the sudden death of my kinsman Mr. Myers. We went to College together, and were inseparables for many years. I saw him buried in Millom Church, by the side of his wife. The churchyard is romantically situated—Duddon Sands on one side, and a rocky hill scattered over with ancient trees on the other. Close by are the remains of the old castle of the Huddlestons, part of which are converted into farm-houses, and the whole embowered in tall trees that tower up from the sides and bottom of the circular moat. The churchyard is in like manner girt round with trees. The church is of striking architecture, and apparently of remote antiquity. We entered with the funeral train, the day being too far advanced to allow

the clergyman to see to read the Service, and no light had been provided, so we sate some time, in solemn silence. At last one candle was brought, which served both for minister and clerk, casting a wan light on their faces. On my right hand were two stone figures in a recumbent position (like those of the monument in Coleorton Church), Huddlestons of other years; and the voice of the minister was accompanied, and almost interrupted, by the slender sobbing of a young person, an Indian by half-blood, and by the father's side a niece of the deceased wife of the person whom we were interring. She hung over the coffin, and continued this Oriental lamentation till the service was over, everybody else, except one faithful servant, being apparently indifferent. Mrs. W., I find, has mentioned our return by Duddonside, and how much we were pleased with the winter appearance of my favourite river.

Since that expedition, I have been called to Appleby, and detained there upon business. In returning I was obliged to make a circuit, which showed me for the time several miles of the course of that beautiful stream the Eden, from the bridge near Temple Sowerby down to Kirkoswald. Part of this tract of country I had indeed seen before, but not from the same points of view. It is a charming region, particularly at the spot where the Eden and Emont join. The rivers appeared exquisitely brilliant, gliding under rocks, and through green meadows; with woods, and sloping cultivated grounds, and pensive russet moors interspersed; and along the circuit of the horizon lofty hills and mountains, clothed rather than concealed, in fleecy clouds and resplendent vapours.

My road brought me suddenly, and unexpectedly, upon that ancient monument, called by the country people Long Meg and her Daughters. Everybody has heard of it, and so had I from very early childhood, but had never seen it before. Next to Stonehenge, it is beyond dispute the most noble relic of the kind that this or probably any other country contains. Long

Meg is a single block of unhewn stone, eighteen feet high, at a small distance from a vast circle of other stones, some of them of huge size, though curtailed of their stature by their own incessant pressure upon it."

In writing to Richard Sharp, in April 1822, Wordsworth asked for Rogers' address, adding that he desired it "for a literary purpose." The following is the letter he wrote to Rogers after receiving his address :—

"Lowther Castle, September 16, 1822.

"MY DEAR ROGERS,—It gave me great pleasure to hear from our common friend, Sharp, that you had returned from the Continent in such excellent health ; which I hope you will continue to enjoy, in spite of our fogs, rains, east winds, coal fires, and other clogs upon light spirits and free breathing. I have long wished to write to you on a little affair of my own, or rather of my sister's ; and the facility of procuring a frank in this house has left my procrastinating habit without excuse.

Some time ago you expressed (as perhaps you will remember) a wish that my sister would publish her *Recollections of her Scottish Tour* ; and you interested yourself so far in the scheme as kindly to offer to assist in disposing of it to a publisher for her advantage. We know that your skill and experience in these matters are great, and she is now disposed to profit by them, provided you continue to think as favourably of the measure as heretofore. The fact is, she was so much gratified by her tour in Switzerland, that she has a strong wish to add to her knowledge of that country, and to extend her ramble to some part of Italy. As her own little fortune is not sufficient to justify a step of this kind, she has no hope of revisiting those countries, unless an adequate sum could be procured through the means of this MS. You are now fairly in possession of her motives ; if you still think that the publication would do her

no discredit, and are of opinion that a respectable sum of money might be had for it, which she has no chance of effecting except through your exertion, she would be much obliged, as I also should be, if you would undertake to manage the bargain; and the MS. shall be sent you, as soon as it is revised. She has further to beg that you would be so kind as to look it over, and strike out what you think might be better omitted.

I detected you in a small collection of poems, entitled *Italy*, which we all read with much pleasure. Venice, and the Brides of Venice (that was the title I think), pleased as much as any. Some parts of the Venice are particularly fine. I had no fault to find, but rather too strong a leaning to the pithy and concise, and to some peculiarities of versification which occur perhaps too often. . . .—Believe me, my dear Rogers, faithfully yours,
WM. WORDSWORTH."

On the 23d January 1823, Dorothy Wordsworth wrote to Rogers from Rydal Mount:—

"MY DEAR SIR,—I cannot but be flattered by your thinking so well of my Journal as to recommend (indirectly at least) that I should not part with all power over it, till its future has been tried. You will not be surprised, however, that I am not so hopeful, and that I am apprehensive that after having encountered the unpleasantness of coming before the public I might not be assisted in attaining my object. I have, then, to ask whether a middle course be not possible, that is, whether your favourable opinion, confirmed perhaps by some other good judges, might not induce a bookseller to give a certain sum for the right to publish a given number of copies. In fact, I find it next to impossible to make up my mind to sacrifice my privacy for a certainty *less* than two hundred pounds, a sum which would effectually aid me in accomplishing the ramble I so much, and I hope not unwisely, wish for. If a bargain could be made on terms of this sort, your expectation of

further profits (which expectation I would willingly share) need not be parted with, and I should have the further gratification of acting according to your advice.

I have nothing further to say, for it is superfluous to trouble you with my scruples, and the fears which I have that a work of such slight pretensions will be wholly overlooked in this writing and publishing (especially *tour*-writing and *tour*-publishing) age; and when factions and parties, literary and political, are so busy in endeavouring to stifle all attempts to interest, however pure from any taint of the world, and however humble in their claims.

In the *Memorials* my brother himself likes best the stanzas upon Ensiedeln,* the Three Cottage Girls, and above all the Eclipse upon the Lake of Lugano; and in the *Sketches* the succession of those on the Reformation, and those towards the conclusion of the third part.—Believe me, dear Sir, yours gratefully, and with sincere esteem,

“DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.”

Why this publication was not proceeded with at the time we have no means of knowing. It was postponed till Principal Shairp edited the *Recollections* of the Tour, in 1873, seventy years after it occurred—with what loss to the readers of English Literature and to the lovers of Scottish Scenery it is difficult to say. Meanwhile, in the same month as that in which her brother wrote to Rogers about the publication of these memorials of her first tour, she started, with her sister-in-law, on a second tour in Scotland.

Before alluding to it, a few domestic incidents belonging to the year 1822 may be referred to.

On the 13th June, Dorothy Wordsworth, writing to Mrs. Marshall, refers to the sad death of Mrs. Quillinan. The

* These are the stanzas entitled *Composed in one of the Catholic Cantons*.

Quillinans had settled at Ivy Cottage, Mr. Tillbrooke's house below Rydal Mount. It was due to the accident of her clothes catching fire. The event cast a shadow over their circle. She also refers to an adventure which her brother had met with:—

“The accident might have been terrible. Had the horse been one inch nearer the wall, his death would have been inevitable. The sharp stone, which gave a grazing side-cut to the skull, would have penetrated into the head. . . . It happened, not at Haweswater, but about two miles on this side of Bampton. My brother had kind and judicious friends at hand. He was removed to Dr. Scatterthwaite's, and very soon after he reached that quiet comfortable house, Dr. Harrison arrived.”

As already mentioned, Dorothy Wordsworth left Rydal for Scotland in September 1822.

Of this second Tour she kept a record—not equal in extent to the former in 1803—but valuable in many ways. It consists of rough and rapid jottings of events and scenery, of persons met with, conversations by the way, and the many trivial incidents of travel, taken down carelessly, with no regard to style, or sometimes even to grammar. It was evidently meant to be merely an aid to memory, should she ever attempt to expand it at leisure, as she had enlarged the notes of her former tours; and yet, even in the midst of these dry bones of travel, we have many ideal touches, as well as photographic pictures. The fragments are, in their very brokenness, full of character. She travelled with Joanna Hutchinson, Mrs. Wordsworth's sister, “Joanna, that wild-hearted maid,” whose laugh Wordsworth immortalised in 1803, in one of his *Poems on the Naming of Places*.

Writing to Crabb Robinson (December 21, 1823) of this Scottish Tour, she says that she had intended to return home in a fortnight, but stayed seven weeks.

"I had for years promised Joanna to go with her to Edinburgh—that was her object; but we planned a little tour, up the Forth to Stirling, thence by track-boat to Glasgow; from Dumbarton to Rob Roy's cave by steam; stopping at Tarbet; thence in a cart to Inveraray; back again to Glasgow, down Loch Fyne, and up the Clyde; thence on the coach to Lanark; and from Lanark to Moffat in a cart. There we stopped two days, my companion being an invalid; and she fancied the waters might cure her, but a bathing-place which nobody frequents is never in order; and we were glad to leave Moffat, crossing the wild country again in a cart, to the banks of the river Esk. We returned to Edinburgh for the sake of warm baths. We were three weeks in lodgings at Edinburgh. Joanna had much of that sort of pleasure which one has in first seeing a foreign country; and in our travels, whether on the outside of a coach, on the deck of a steamboat, or in whatever way we got forward, she was always cheerful, never complaining of bad fare, bad inns, or anything else. . . .

My Brother's mind, since our summer company left us, has been so much taken up with anxiety that, till within the last three weeks, he has done nothing. Our first job was to prepare, with additions, a second edition of his little book on the Lakes. He is now giving his mind to poetry again, but I do not think he will ever in his life-time publish any more poems, for they hang on hand, never selling. The *Sketches* and the *Memorials* have not, I daresay, *half* sold. I will transcribe a sonnet which he felt himself called upon to write in justification of the Russians, whom he felt he had injured by not having given them their share in the overthrow of Buonaparte in conjunction with the elements."

She then quotes:—

By self-devoted Moscow, by the blaze.¹

¹ See vol. vi., Appendix, note E, p. 366.

The following are extracts from this Scottish Journal:—

“*Friday, 14th September 1822.*—Cart at the door at nine o'clock with our pretty black-eyed boy, Leonard Backhouse, to drive the old grey horse. . . . Scene at Castlecary very pretty. . . . Nothing which we English call comfort within doors, but much better, civility and kindness. Old woman bringing home her son to die; left his wife, she will never see him again.” [She seems to have gone by the Forth and Clyde Canal.] “Scene at the day's end very pretty. The fiddler below,—his music much better there. A soldier at the boat's head; scarlet shawls, blue ribbons, something reminding me of Bruges; but we want the hum, and the fruit, and the Flemish girl with her flowers. The people talk cheerfully, and all is quiet; groups of cottages. Evening, with a town lying in view. Lassies in pink at the top of the bank; handsome boatman throws an apple to each; graceful waving of thanks.

Thursday morning [on the Clyde].—Now we come to Lord Blantyre's house, as I remember it eighteen years ago. . . . Gradually appears the Rock of Dumbarton, very wild, low water, screaming birds, to me very interesting from recollections. Entrance to Loch Lomond grand and stately. Large hills before us, covered with heather, and sprinkled all over with wood. Deer on island, in shape resembling the isle at Windermere. Further on an island of large size, curiously scattered over with yew-trees—more yews than are to be found together in Great Britain—wind blowing cold, waves like the sea. I could not find out our cottage isle. The bay at Luss even more beautiful than in imagination, thatched cottages, two or three slated houses. The little chapel, the sweet brook, and the pebbly shore, so well remembered.

Ferry house at Inversnaid just the same as before, excepting now a glass window. A girl now standing at the door, but her I cannot fancy our ‘Highland girl’; and the

babe, while its granddame worked, now twenty, grown up to toil, and perhaps hardship; or, is it in a quiet grave? The whole waterfall drops into the lake as before. The tiny bay is calm, while the middle of the lake is stirred by breezes; but we have long left the sea-like region of Balloch. Our Highland musician tunes his pipes as we approach Rob Roy's cave. Grandeur of Nature, mixed with stage effect. Old Highlanders, with long grey locks, cap, and plaid; boys at different heights on the rocks. All crowd to Rob Roy's cave, as it is called, and pass under in interrupted succession, for the cave is too small to contain many at once. They stoop, yet come out all covered with dirt. We were wiser than this; for they seem to have no motive but to say they have been in Roy's cave, because Sir Walter has written about it.

Evening.—Now sitting at Cairndhu Inn after a delightful day. The house on the outside just the same as eighteen years ago—I suppose they new-whitewash every year—but within much smarter; carpets on every floor (that is the case everywhere now in Scotland), even at that villainous inn at Tarbet, which we have just escaped from, which for scolding, and dirt, and litter, and damp, surely cannot be surpassed through all Scotland. Yet we had a civil repast; a man waited. People going to decay, children ill-managed, daughter too young for her work, father lamed, mother a whisky-drinker, two or three black big-faced servant-maids without caps, one barefoot, the other too lazy or too careless to fasten up her stockings, ceilings falling down, windows that endangered the fingers, and could only be kept open by props; and what a number of people in the kitchen, all in one another's way! We peeped into the empty rooms, unmade beds, carpeted floors, damp and dirty. They sweep stairs, floors, passages, with a little parlour hearth-brush; waiter blew the dust off the table before breakfast. I walked down

to the lake; sunny morning; in the shady wood was overtaken by a woman. Her sudden coughing startled me. She was going to her day's work, with a bottle of milk or whey. 'It's varra pleasant walkin here.' It was our first greeting. The church, she said, was at Arrochar. . . . After breakfast, we set off on our walk to Arrochar. The air fresh, sunshine cheerful, and Joanna seemed to gain strength, as she walked along between the steep hilly trough. The cradle-valley not so deep to the eye as last night, and not so quiet to the ear through the barking of dogs. These echoed through the vale, when I passed by some reapers, making haste to end their day's work. Gladly did I bend my course from this passage between the hills to Arrochar, remembering our descent in the Irish car. My approach now slower, and I was glad, both for the sake of past and present times. Wood thicker than then, and some of the gleaming of the lake shut out by young larch-trees. Sun declining upon the mountains of Glencroe, shining full on Cobbler. No touch of melancholy on the scene, all majesty and solemn grandeur, with loveliness in colouring, golden and green and grey crags. On my return to Loch Lomond, the sunlight streaming a veil of brightness, with slanting rays towards Arrochar, where I sate on the steeps opposite to Ben Lomond; and on Ben Lomond's top a pink light rested for a long time, till a cloud hid the pyramid from me. I stayed till moonlight was beginning. . . .

Friday morning.—The gently descending smooth road, the sea-breezes, the elegant house, with a foreign air, all put Joanna into spirits and strength. 'Cobbler,' like a waggoner, his horse's head turned round from us, the waggon behind with a covered top. . . . Chapel like a neglected Italian chapel, a few melancholy graves and burial-places—pine-trees round. Fishermen's nets waving in the breeze; sombrous, yellow belt of shore, yellowish even in the mid-day light. . . . At the inn, went

into the same parlour where William and I dined, after parting with Coleridge. . . .

In Glencroe [they drove over] huge stones scattered over the glen ; one hut in first reach, none in second, white house in third ; last reach rocky, green, deep. . . . When we came to the turning of the glen, where several waters join, formerly not seen distinctly, but heard very loud, the stream in the middle of the glen, a long winding line, was rosy red, the former line of Loch Restal. A glorious sky before us, with dark clouds, like islands in a sea of fire, purple hills below. Behind two *smooth* pyramids. Soon they were cowled in white, long before the redness left the sky. After Glenfinlas, the road not so long, nor dreary, nor prospect so wild as at our first approach ; uncertain whither tending. Church to right with steeple (surely more steeples in Scotland than formerly). Reached Cairndhu, excellent fire in kitchen, great kindness, still an unintelligible number of women, but all quiet. . . .

Saturday morning.—Men, women, and children amongst the corn by the wayside, children's business chiefly play. Passed the church ; the bridge like a Roman ruin—how grand in its desolation, the parapet on one side broken, the way across it grown over, like a common, with close grass and grunsel, only a faint foot-track on one side. Met a well-looking mother with bonny bairns. Spoke to her of them. 'They would be weel eneuch,' said she, 'if they were weel skelpit!' The father seemed pleased, and left his work (running) to help us over the bridge. A shower ; shelter under a bridge ; sun and shadows on a smooth hill at head of loch ; at a distance a single round-headed tree. Tree gorgeous yellow, and soft green, and many shadows. Now comes a slight rainbow. Towards Inveraray strong sunbeams, white misty rain, hills gleaming through it. Now I enter by the ferry-house, Glenfinlas opposite. . . .

How quiet and still the road, now and then a solitary passenger. No sound but of the robins continually singing; sometimes a distant oar on the waters, and now and then reapers at work above on the hills. Barking dog, at empty cottage, chide us from above. The lake so still I cannot hear it, nor any sound of water, but at intervals rills trickling. I hasten on for boat for Inveraray; view splendid as Italy, only wanting more boats. There is a pleasure in the utter stillness of calm water. Sitting together on the rock, we hear the breeze rising; water now gently weltering. . . . How continually Highlanders say, 'Ye're varra welcome.'

'This is more like an enchanted castle than anything we've seen,' so says Joanna, now that we are seated, with one candle, in a large room, with black door, black chimney-piece, black moulding. . . . We enter, as abroad, into a useless space, turn to left, and a black-headed lass, with long hair and dirty face, meets us. We ask for lodgings, and she carries us from one narrow passage to another, and up a narrow staircase, and round another as narrow, only not so high as the broad ones at T——, just to the top of the house. We enter a large room with two beds, walls damp, no bell. . . . Reminded of foreign countries, as I walked along the shore; beside dirty houses. Long scarlet cloaks, women without caps; a mother on a log of wood in the sunshine, her face as yellow as gold, dress ragged; she holds her baby standing on the ground, while it laughs and plays with the bristles of a pig eating its breakfast. . . . Came along an avenue, one and a half miles at least, all beeches, some very fine, cathedral-fluted pillars."

[They sailed to Greenock by the Kyles of Bute, Loch Striven, etc., and went on to Glasgow, Bothwell, the Falls of Clyde, Lanark, Elvanfoot, Moffat, Hawick, Selkirk, Edinburgh.]

Towards the close of 1822, Wordsworth had some correspondence with Richard Sharp about the investment of a sum of

£2000 in the French Funds. He was afraid of running any speculative risk, was "not sure that the French Government would honestly abide by its engagements." He "was not anxious for profit, by selling in and out"; all he looked for was "the regular payment of good interest." He was glad to consult an experienced business friend, and asked Sharp to undertake the negotiation for him, saying, "I would be perfectly contented to have my cock-boat tied to your seventy-four." Mr. Sharp seems, however, to have judged the responsibility of acting for his friend in this matter too great.

In one of these letters to Sharp (Nov. 12, 1822) Wordsworth said of his sister's visit to Scotland, "She has made notes of her tour, which are very amusing, particularly as a contrast to the loneliness of her former mode of travelling."

As was to be expected, Coleridge did not care for Wordsworth's later poems as he did for the earlier ones; and, in literary gatherings in London, expressed himself freely regarding them.

Henry Crabb Robinson writes in his *Diary* :—

"Dec. 21, 1822.—Dined at Aders', to meet Coleridge. He had not seen Wordsworth's last works, and spoke less highly of his immediately preceding writings than he used to do (and still does) of his earlier works. He reproaches him with a vulgar attachment to orthodoxy, in its literal sense. The latter end of *The Excursion*, he says, is distinguished from the former; and he can ascertain by internal evidence the newest from the early compositions among his works. He reproaches Wordsworth with a disregard to the mechanism of his verse, and, in general, insinuates a decline of his faculties. Of Southey's politics he spoke also depreciatingly. He is intellectually a very dependent, but morally an independent man. In the judgment of S. I concur altogether. Of W. I believe C. judges under personal feelings of unkindness."

Wordsworth went up to London in the spring of 1823. Southey writes from Keswick, 22d February, "W. is at Coleorton." It was his customary halting-place in going to or returning from town.

The following is also from Robinson's *Diary* :—

"April 4.—At Monkhouse's our party consisted of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb, Moore, and Rogers, five poets of very unequal worth, and most disproportionate popularity, whom the public probably would array in the very inverse order, except that it would place Moore above Rogers. During this afternoon Coleridge alone displayed any of his peculiar talent. He talked much and well. I have not for years seen him in such excellent health and spirits. His subject metaphysical criticism. Wordsworth he chiefly talked to. Rogers occasionally let fall a remark. Moore seemed conscious of his inferiority. He was very attentive to C., but seemed to relish L., whom he sat next. L. was in good form, kept himself within bounds, and was only cheerful at last."

Of this dinner Lamb wrote to Bernard Barton : *—

"I wished for you yesterday. I dined in Parnassus with Wordsworth, Coleridge, Rogers, and Tom Moore. Half the poetry of England constellated and clustered in Gloucester Place! It was a delightful evening! Coleridge was in his finest vein of talk—had all the talk; and let 'em talk as evilly as they do of the envy of poets, I am sure not one there but was content to be nothing but a listener. The muses are dumb while Apollo lectured on his and their fine art. It is a lie that poets are envious. I have known the best of them, and can speak to it, that they give each their merits, and are the kindest critics, as well as the best authors. . . ."

* See *Lamb's Letters*, edited by Alfred Ainger, vol. ii. pp. 69, 70.

On the following day Robinson wrote in his *Reminiscences*:—

“*April 5th.*—A large musical party in Euston Square, at which Wordsworth and Coleridge were present; and I noticed a great diversity in their enjoyment of music. Coleridge was very lively, and openly expressed his delight. Wordsworth sat retired, with his face covered, and was silent. Some thought he was asleep: he *might* pass over to sleep after enjoyment. He declared himself highly gratified, and, indeed, came to the party after he had declined other invitations. Flaxman, who was also there, confessed that he could not endure fine music *long*. It exhausted him. So it might be with Wordsworth.”

Wordsworth's intention was to start for Belgium and Holland soon after reaching London. The following letter to John Kenyon explains the delay:—

“*Lee Priory, May 16th.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND, . . . We came hither five weeks ago, meaning, after a fortnight's stay, to cross the channel for a little tour in Flanders and Holland; but the spring was tardy and froward. When a day or two of fine weather came, they were followed by blustering, and even tempestuous, winds; these abated, and out came my old vernal enemy, the inflammation in my eyes, which dashed our resolutions, and here I am, still obliged to employ Mrs. Wordsworth as my amanuensis.

This day, however, being considerably better, we shall go to Dover, with a view to embark for Ostend to-morrow, unless detained by similar obstacles. From Ostend we mean to go to Ghent, to Antwerp, Breda, Utrecht, Amsterdam—to Rotterdam by Haarlem, the Hague, and Leyden—thence to Antwerp by another route, and perhaps shall return by Mechlin, Brussels, Lille, and Ypres to Calais—or direct to Ostend as we came. We hope to be landed in England within a month. We shall

hurry through London homewards, where we are naturally anxious already to be, having left Rydal Mount so far back as February. . . .

In an hour and half we must leave this conventual mansion, with its pictures and its books, and bid a farewell to its groves and nightingales, which this morning have been singing divinely. By-the-by, it has been so cold that they have been silent during the season of darkness. These delights we must surrender, and take our way on foot three miles along the pleasant banks of Stour to fall in with the Dover coach. At this moment the S.W. wind is blustering abominably, and whirling the leaves and blossoms about in a way that reminds me of the tricks it is playing with the surf on the naked coast of Ostend.—Ever affectionately yours, WM. WORDSWORTH."

The following are Mrs. Wordsworth's memoranda of this short tour with her husband. The MS., which I have read, is headed "Minutes collected from Mem. Book, etc., taken during a Tour in Holland, commenced May 16th, 1823."

"Left Lee. (I now transcribe what was dictated by William.) . . . Dover, as interesting as ever, and the French coast very striking as we descended. Walked under Shakespear's Cliff by moonlight. Met several sailors, none of whom had ever asked himself the height of the cliff. I cannot think it can be more than 400 feet at the utmost; how odd that the description in Lear should ever have been supposed to have been meant for a reality. I know nothing that more forcibly shows the little reflection with which even men of sense read poetry. 'How truly,' exclaims the historian of Dover, 'has Shakespear described the precipice.' How much better would he (the historian) have done had he given us its actual elevation! The sky looked threatening, a wheel at a great distance round the moon, ominous according to our westland shepherds. The furze in full blossom. . .

Ostend, half-past 8 o'clock, Sunday morning.— . . . We were driven at a fierce rate before the wind. . . . We proceeded till about four o'clock, when we were—had the same wind continued—within two hours of Ostend. But now, overhead was a bustle of quick steps, trailing and heaving of ropes, with voices in harmony. Below me, the vessel *slashed* among the waters, quite different from the sound and driving motion I had become accustomed to. . . . The phosphorus lights from the oars were beautiful; and when we approached the harbour, these, in connection with the steady pillar streaming across the water from the lighthouse, upon the pier; and afterwards, still more beautiful, when these faded before a brilliant spectacle (caused by a parcel of carpenters and sailors burning the tar from the hulk of a large vessel under repair), upon the beach. I thought if we were to see nothing more this exhibition repaid us for our day of suffering. But we wished for the painter's skill to delineate the scene, the various objects illuminated by the burning ship, the glowing faces of the different figures—among which was a dog—the ropes, ladders, sands, and sea, with the body of intense bright fire spreading out and fading among the dim stars in the grey mottled sky. . . . Ostend looks well as to houses compared with one of our English towns of like importance. The tall windows, and the stature of the buildings, give them a dignity nowhere found with us; but it has no public buildings of interest. Climbing an oblique path which led up to the ramparts, a little boy called out in broken English, 'Stop, or the soldiers will put you in prison.' Not a living creature to be seen on that airy extensive walk, everybody cooped in the sultry flat. Melancholy enough at all times, but particularly so on this great day of annual celebration. But the joy, if any there is, is strictly confined to the doing of nothing. A few idle people were playing at a game of chance, under the green daisy-clad ramparts. I got a glimpse of the country by climbing the

steps to a wind-mill, 'snatching a fearful *joy*' I cannot call it, for the view was tame; the sun however shone bright on the fields, some of which were yellow as furze in blossom, with what produce I know not. . . .

Bruges, Hôtel de la Fleur de Blé; Monday, May 19th.— . . . Bruges loses nothing of its attractions upon a second visit as far as regards buildings, etc., but a bustling Fair is not the time to feel the natural sentiment of such a place. We crept about the shady parts, and among the booths, and traversed the cool extensive vault under the Hôtel de Ville, where the butcher's market is held (a thousand times the most commodious shambles I ever saw), and the bazaars above, and made some purchases.

Tuesday 20th.— . . . The thought of Bruges upon the Fair-day never can disturb the image of that spiritualised city, seen in 1820, under the subdued light and quiet of a July evening and early morning. . . . Nothing can be more refreshing than to flout thus at ease, the awning screening us from the sun, and the pleasant breezes fanning our temples; . . . cottages constantly varying the shores, which are particularly gay at this season, interspersed with fruit-tree blossom and the broom flower; goats tethered on the grassy banks, under the thin line of elms; a village with a pretty church, midway on the journey; . . . the air delightfully refreshed by the rain; the banks, again low, allow the eye to stretch beyond the avenue; corn looking well, rich daisy-clad pastures, and here alive with grasshoppers; large village on both sides of the canal, bridge between, from which letters are dropped into the barge, as we pass, by means of a shoe. A sale at a Thames-like chateau; we take on purchasers with their bargains—chests of drawers, bed and chamber furniture of all sorts—barge crowded; Catholic priests do not scruple to interlard their

conversation with oaths; the three Towers of Ghent, seen through the misty air in the distance under the arch of the canal bridge, give a fine effect to this view; drawing nearer and gliding between villages and chateaux, the architecture looks very rich. . . .

Ghent, Thursday 22d.—Left Ghent at 7 o'clock by diligence. . . . Paved road between trees; elms with scattered oaks; square fields divided by sluices, some dry, others with water bordered by willows, etc., thin and low; neat houses and villages, English-looking, only the windows and window-shutters gaily painted; labourers upon their knees weeding flax; some corn, very short, but shot into ear; broom here and there in flower, else a perfect uniformity of surface. . . .

Antwerp.— . . . Disappointed by the first view of Antwerp standing in nakedness. . . . Few travellers have been more gratified than we were during our two days' residence in this fine city, which we left, after having visited the Cathedral, and feasted our eyes on those magnificent pictures of Rubens, over and over again; and often was this great pleasure heightened almost to rapture, when, during mass, the full organ swelled and penetrated the remotest corners of that stately edifice—here we were never weary of lingering; but none of the churches did we leave unvisited; that of St. James was the next in interest to us, which contained Rubens' family monument; a chapel or *recess* railed off, as others are, in which hung a beautiful painting by the great master himself bearing date 23d May, -64; a mother presenting a child to an old man, said to be Rubens' father; three females behind the old man, and R. himself, in the character of St. George, holding a red flag among a group of angels hovering over the living child. The drapery of the principal female figure is a rich blue. R.'s three wives are represented in this exquisite

picture. Besides the several churches, so rich in fine paintings, we spent much time in the museum—formerly the Convent des Recollets—an extremely interesting place, independent of the treasure now contained in it. . . . The picture by which I was most impressed was a Christ on the Cross, by Van Dyck; there was a chaste simplicity about this piece which quite riveted me; the principal figure in the centre, St. Dominique in an attitude of contemplation; the St. Catherine embracing the foot of the Cross, and lifting a countenance of deep searching agony, which, compared with the expression of patient suffering in that of the Saviour, was almost too much to look upon, yet once seen it held me there. . . .

Saturday 24th.—At 9 o'clock we left Antwerp by the diligence. . . . Breda looked well by moonlight, crossed by steamboat the *Bies Bosch* near Dort, which town we reached by half-past six on Sunday morning, May 26th. We are now in the country of many waters. . . . Mounted the tower, which bore the date 1626; an interesting command of prospect—Stad-house, Bourse, winding streets, trees and rivers (the Meuse) intermingled; walks, screened by trees, look cool. The eye follows five streams from different parts of the handsome town into the country; vessels moving upon them in all directions. . . .

Rotterdam.—Walked to the "Plantation," a sort of humble Vauxhall. About sunset, seated upon the banks of the Meuse; sails gliding down, white and red; the dark tower of the Cathedral; a glowing line of western sky, with twelve windmills as grand as castles, most of them at rest, but the arms of some languidly in motion, crimsoned by the setting sun. A file of grey clouds run southward from the Cathedral tower. The birds, which were faintly warbling in the pleasure-ground behind us when we sate down, have now ceased. Three very

slender spires, one of which we know to be the Hôtel de Ville, denote, together with the Cathedral tower, the neighbourhood of a large town.

Tuesday 27th.—Left Rotterdam at ten o'clock. As we crossed the bridge, the fine statue of Erasmus, rising silently, with eyes fixed upon his book, above the noisy crowd gathered round the booths and vehicles, which upon the market-day beset him, and backed by buildings and trees, intermingled with the fluttering pennons from vessels unloading their several cargoes into the warehouses, produced a curious and very striking contrast. . . . The stately stream down which we floated took us to the royal town of the Hague. Arriving there at five o'clock, we immediately walked to the wood, in which stands the Palace; charming promenades, pools of water, swans, stately trees, birds warbling, military music—the *Brac Bells*; the streets similar to those at Delf; screens of trees, sometimes on one side, but generally on both sides of the canal; bridges at convenient distances across. . . . Looked with interest upon the ground where the De Wits were massacred, to which we were conducted by a funny old man, of whom we purchased a box. The spot is a narrow space, passing from one square to another, if I recollect right, near to the public building, whence the brothers had been dragged by the infuriated rabble. Horse-chestnut trees in flower everywhere.

Wednesday 28th.— . . . Looked into the fine room where the lottery is kept, which interested us, as well as the countenances of those who were working at fortune's wheel, and those who were eagerly gaping for her favours. Above all, the King's Gallery most attracted us with its magnificent collection of pictures. . . .

Leyden, Thursday 29th.—Arose, and found that our commodious chamber looked upon pleasure-walks, which we at once determined must be the University garden, naturally

giving to this place the sort of accommodations found in our own seats of learning, but no such luxury belongs to the students of Leyden. The ground with its plantations through which these walks are carried, and upon which the sun now so cheerfully shone, was formerly covered with buildings that were destroyed, together with the inhabitants, by an explosion which took place in a barge of gunpowder in 1806, then lying in the neighbouring canal. . . .

There are no colleges, or separate dwellings, in Leyden, for the students; they are lodged with different families in the town. Our guide had three at his house from England, as he told us. A wandering sheep lying at the threshold, as we passed a good-looking house in the street; were told that this was a pensioner upon the public, that it would lie there till it was fed, and then would pass on to some other door. This animal had been brought up the pet of a soldier once quartered at Leyden, and when he changed his situation his favourite was sent into the fields, but preferring human society, it could not be confined amongst its fellows, but ever returned to the town, and, begging its daily food, it passed from door to door of those houses which its old master had frequented, obstinately keeping its station until an alms was bestowed—bread, vegetables, soup, nothing came wrong, and as soon as this was received, the patient mendicant walked quietly away.

Haarlem.— . . . Reached Haarlem at five o'clock; went directly to the Cathedral, mounted the tower, an hour too early for the sunset; a splendid and interesting view beyond any we have seen. Looking eastward, the canal seen stretching through houses and among the trees, to the spires of Amsterdam in the distance. A little to the right, the Mere of Haarlem spotted with vessels, the river Spaaren winding among trees through the town; steeple towers of Utrecht beyond the Mere. The Boss, a fine wood and elegant mansion built by — Hope, now a royal

residence; new kirk, fine tower; the sea, and sand-hills beyond the flats glowing under a dazzling western sky. The winding Spaaren again among green fields brings the eye round to the Amsterdam canal, up which we shall glide. . . .

Friday 30th.— . . . We were floating between stunted willows towards Amsterdam, the birds sweetly warbling, but the same unvaried course before us. I have, however, a basket at my feet containing pots of fragrant geranium, and a beautiful flowering fern, brought, I suppose, from the market where we saw the commodities offered for sale. The groups of figures, with their baskets and stalls of vegetables, ranged along the shady avenues, have often a striking effect; the fanciful architecture towering above, as seen from the end of one of the market streets, especially if the view be terminated by a spire or a lofty tower. . . . The spires of Amsterdam, and different spires and shipping, rise beyond the flat line of the water. The same cold north wind is breathing in the sunshine, now that we are not within the screen of the trees. The plains are scattered with cattle, and a broken line of Dutch farm-houses, which we have hitherto in vain looked for, stretch at a field's distance from the canal. Having now resumed our seats, reeds and pools diversify our course; and drawing nearer Amsterdam, I must put away my book, to look after the pleasure-houses and gardens; the first presents a bed of full-blown China roses.

Amsterdam, Saturday 31st. . . . *Brock.*—After walking one hour and five minutes by the side of the canal, upon a good road, through a tract of peat-mossy rich pasturage, besprinkled with cattle, and bounded by a horizon broken by spires, steeple-towers, villages, scattered farms, and the unfailing windmill—seen single or in pairs, or clustered, at short distances everywhere—we are now seated beneath the shelter of a friendly windmill; the north wind bracing us, and the swallows twitter-

ing under a cloudless grey sky above our heads. . . . After twenty-six minutes' further walk, the canal spreads into a circular basin, upon the opposite margin of which stands the quaintly dressed little town of Brock. The church spire rises from amid elegantly neat houses, chiefly of wood, much carved and ornamented, and covered with glazed tiles. . . . In each of these houses is a certain elaborately ornamented door by which at their weddings the newly-married pair, and perhaps their friends, enter. It is then closed, and never opened again until the man or his wife is carried out a corpse. . . . The streets are paved with what are called Dutch-tiles, but certainly not the polished slabs we have been accustomed to give this name to—more like our bricks, of various colours arranged in patterns, as Mr. B. would like the floors of his sheds, etc., to be. A piece of white marble often forms the centre to some device; where the flooring in a garden happens to be uniform in colour, a pattern is formed by a sprinkling of sand, which seems to lie as a part of the flooring, unmoved under a fresh blowing wind. . . .

Saardam, Sunday evening, June 1st.—We have had a delightful trip to-day to Saardam, another North Holland town. Visited the hut, and workshop, in which Peter the Great wrought as a carpenter. . . .

Monday, June 2d.—Am thankful to rest before we depart from Amsterdam, in which I would not live to be Queen of Holland; yet she is mistress of the most magnificent palace I ever saw, furnished substantially, and in excellent taste, by Louis Buonaparte. The edifice formerly belonged to the city, the Stad-house, and was presented to him as a compliment upon his elevation to the throne. . . . At five this day we are to depart for Utrecht, most happy to turn our faces homeward, and to leave this watery country, where there is not a drop fit to drink. . . .

Antwerp, June 5th.—Arose at seven, and have revisited most, indeed all, that best pleased us before—and accomplished our wish to mount the Cathedral tower, and under favourable skies; a glorious sunset upon the Scheldt; the clouds, the shadow of the spire, the spire itself, the town below, the country around, our own enjoyments—these we shall ever remember, but we are to be off to Malines, at seven o'clock in the morning. . . .

Wednesday 11th.— . . . Adventures we have had few; William's eyes being so much disordered, and so easily aggravated, naturally made him shun society, and crippled us in many respects; but I trust we have stored up thoughts, and images, that will not die."

On the 16th July 1823, Southey wrote to George Dickson, New York:—

"Wordsworth is just returned from a trip to the Netherlands. He loves rambling, and has no pursuits which require him to be stationary. I shall probably see him in a few days. Every year shows more and more how strongly his poetry has leavened the rising generation. Your mocking-bird is said to improve the strain which he imitates; this is not the case with ours."

This reference to Southey suggests the change which Wordsworth introduced into the striking lines written by his friend a few years before this time—

My days among the dead are pass'd, *etc.*

Southey's son and biographer says:—

"The very course of his studies and the habits of his life forced upon him such continual thoughts of the 'mighty dead' that they seem to have been almost like living and breathing

companions, and his wishes to meet and commune with them face to face, became like the intense desire we sometimes feel to meet a living person known intimately yet not personally.

His own lines on the subject were written a few years before this period of his life :—

I.

My days among the dead are pass'd ;
Around me I behold,
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,
The mighty minds of old ;
My never-failing friends are they,
With whom I converse day by day.

II.

With them I take delight in weal,
And seek relief in woe ;
And while I understand and feel
How much to them I owe,
My cheeks have often been bedewed
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

III.

My thoughts are with the dead, with them
I live in long-past years ;
Their virtues love, their faults condemn,
Partake their hopes and fears ;
And from their lessons seek and find
Instruction with an humble mind.

IV.

My hopes are with the dead ! Anon
My place with them will be,
And I with them shall travel on
Through all futurity ;
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,
That will not perish in the dust.

I have an additional pleasure in quoting these lines here, because Wordsworth once remarked that they possessed a peculiar interest, as a most true and touching representation of

my father's character. He also wished three alterations to be made in them, in order to reduce the language to correctness and simplicity. In the third line, because the phrase 'casual eyes' is too unusual, he proposed—

Where'er I chance these eyes to cast.

In the sixth line, instead of 'converse,' 'commune'; because as it stands, the accent is wrong.

In the second stanza, he thought

While I understand and feel,
My cheeks have often been bedewed,

was a vicious construction grammatically, and proposed instead—

My pensive cheeks are oft bedewed.

These suggestions were made too late for my father to profit by them." *

In the Forster Collection of letters in the South Kensington Museum, there are several from Wordsworth to Walter Savage Landor, for a knowledge of which, and copies of them, I am indebted to the courtesy of the librarian, Mr. R. F. Sketchley. They belong to the years 1821-1824, and extracts from them may here be given in series.

*"Rydal Mount, near Ambleside,
September 3d, 1821.*

MY DEAR SIR,— . . . I feel myself much honoured by the present of your book of Latin poems, and it arrived at a time when I had the use of my eyes for reading, and with great pleasure did I employ them in the perusal of the dissertation annexed to your poems, which I read several times; but the poems themselves I have not been able to look into, for I was

* *The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey*, vol. v. pp. 109, 110.

seized with a fit of composition at that time, and deferred the pleasure to which your poems invited me till I could give them an undivided attention. . . . We live here somewhat singularly circumstanced — in solitude during nearly nine months of the year, and for the rest in a round of engagements. I have nobody near me who reads Latin, so that I can only speak of your essay from recollection. You will not perhaps be surprised when I state that I differ from you in opinion as to the propriety of the Latin language being employed by moderns for works of taste and imagination. Miserable would have been the lot of Dante, Ariosto, and Petrarch if they had preferred the Latin to their mother tongue (there is, by-the-by, a Latin translation of Dante which you do not seem to know), and what could Milton, who was surely no mean master of the Latin tongue, have made of his *Paradise Lost*, had that vehicle been employed instead of the language of the Thames and Severn! Should we even admit that all modern dialects are comparatively changeable, and therefore limited in their efficacy, may not the sentiment which Milton so pleasingly expresses, when he says he is content to be read in his native isle only, be extended to durability; and is it not more desirable to be read with affection and pride, and familiarly for five hundred years, by all orders of minds, and all ranks of people, in your native tongue, than only by a few scattered scholars for the space of three thousand? Had your idylliums been in English, I should long ere this have been as well acquainted with them as with your *Gebir*, and with your other poems.

I met with a hundred things in your ‘Dissertation’ that fell in with my own judgments, but there are many opinions which I should like to talk over with you. Several of the separate remarks, upon Virgil in particular, though perfectly just, would perhaps have been better placed in notes or an appendix; they are details that obstruct the view of the whole.

Are you not also penurious in your praise of Gray? The fragment at the commencement of his fourth book, in which he laments the death of West, in cadence and sentiment, touches me in a manner for which I am grateful. The first book also of the same poems appears to me as well executed as anything of that kind is likely to be. Is there not a speech of Solon to which the concluding couplet of Gray's sonnet bears a more pointed resemblance than to any of the passages you have quoted? He was told not to grieve for the loss of his son, as tears would be of no avail; 'and for that very reason,' replied he, 'do I weep.' It is high time I should thank you for the honourable mention you have made of me.* It could not but be grateful to me to be praised by a poet who has written verses of which I would rather have been the author than of any produced in our time. What I now write to you, I have frequently said to many. . . .—I remain, my dear Sir, sincerely yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

Rydal Mount, April 20th, [1822].

MY DEAR SIR,— . . .† I am surprised, and rather sorry when I hear you say you read little, because you are removed from the pressure of the trash, which, hourly issuing from the press in England, tends to make the very name of writing

* In a letter from Southey to Walter Savage Landor, written from Keswick, December 19, 1821, he said:—" . . . I shall send your letter to Wordsworth, who will, I am sure, be much gratified at seeing what you say of him. His merits are every day more widely acknowledged, in spite of the duncery, in spite of the personal malignity with which he is assailed, and in spite of his injudicious imitators, who are the worst of all enemies. . . . I will send you, in the next package, Humboldt's *Travels*, as far as they are published. He is among travellers what Wordsworth is among poets. . . . God bless you!—R. S."—*The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey*, vol. v. p. 106.

† In the beginning of this letter he refers to the weakness in his eyes, and explains that it began in 1804, with inflammation of the eyelids, which had recurred again and again, so that almost any other ailment indirectly affected them.

books disgusting. I am so situated as to see little of it, but one cannot stop one's ears, and I sometimes envy you that distance which separates you altogether from this intrusion. . . . We have as a near neighbour, an old acquaintance of yours, Mr. Quillinan, who knew you at Bath. He was lately of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, but has retired on half-pay. He married a daughter of Sir Egerton Brydges, and they live, with two nice children, at the foot of our hill. He begs to be kindly remembered to you.

In respect to Latin poetry, I ought to tell you that I am no judge, except upon general principles. I never practised Latin verse, not having been educated at one of the public schools. My acquaintance with Virgil, Horace, Lucretius, and Catullus is intimate; but as I never read them with a critical view to composition, great faults in language might be committed which would escape my notice. Any opinion of mine, therefore, on points of classical nicety would be of no value, should I be so inconsiderate as to offer it. A few days ago, being something better in my sight, I read your *Sponsalia*. It is full of spirit and animation, and is probably of that style of versification which suits the subject; yet, if you thought proper, you could produce, I think, a richer harmony; and I met some serious inaccuracies in the punctuation. . . . I must express a wish, however, that you would gratify us by writing in English. There are noble and stirring things in all that you have written in your native tongue, and that is enough for me. In your *Simonidea*, which I saw some years ago at Mr. Southey's, I was pleased to find rather an out-of-the-way image, in which the present hour is compared to the shade on the dial. It is a singular coincidence, that in the year 1793, when I first became an author, I illustrated the sentiment precisely in the same manner.* In the same work you com-

* See vol. i. p. 6.

mend the fine conclusion of Russel's sonnet upon Philoctetes, and depreciate that form of composition. I do not wonder at this. I used to think it egregiously absurd, though the greatest poets since the revival of literature have written in it. Many years ago my sister happened to read to me the sonnets of Milton, which I could at that time repeat; but somehow or other I was singularly struck with the style of harmony, and the gravity, and republican austerity of those compositions. In the course of the same afternoon I produced three sonnets, and soon after many others; since that time, and from want of resolution to take up anything of length, I have filled up many a moment in writing sonnets, which, if I had never fallen into the practice, might easily have been better employed. *The Excursion* is proud of your approbation. *The Recluse* has had a long sleep, save in my thoughts; my MSS. are so ill-penned, and blurred, that they are useless to all but myself; and at present I cannot face them. But if my stomach can be preserved in tolerable order, I hope you will hear of me again in the character chosen for the title of that poem. I am glad to hear from you.—I remain faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

Rydal Mount, January 21, 1824.

MY DEAR SIR,— . . . You promise me a beautiful copy of Dante, but I ought to mention that I possess the Parma folio of 1795—much the *grandest* book on my shelves—presented to me by our common friend, Mr. Kenyon.

. . . You have given me minute criticism of *Laodamia*. I concur with you in what you say of the first stanza, and had several times attempted to alter it upon your grounds: I cannot, however, accede to your objection to the 'second birth,' merely because the expression has been degraded by conventiclors. I certainly meant nothing more by it than the *eadem cura*, and the *largior æther*, etc., of Virgil's 6th *Æneid*.

All religions owe their origin, or acceptation, to the wish of the human heart to supply in another state of existence the deficiencies of this, and to carry still nearer to perfection whatever we admire in our present condition; so that there must be many modes of expression, arising out of this coincidence, or rather identity of feeling, common to all mythologies; and under this observation I should shelter the phrase from your censure; but I may be wrong in the particular case, though certainly not in the general principle. This leads to a remark in your last, 'that you are disgusted with all books that treat of religion.' I am afraid it is a bad sign in me that I have little relish for any other. Even in poetry it is the imaginative only, viz. that which is conversant with, or turns upon infinity, that powerfully affects me. Perhaps I ought to explain: I mean to say that, unless in those passages where things are lost in each other, and limits vanish, and aspirations are raised, I read with something too much like indifference. But all great poets are in this view powerful religionists, and therefore among many literary pleasures lost, I have not yet to lament over that of verse as departed. As to politics, what do you say to Buonaparte, on the one side and the Holy Alliance on the other, to the prostrate Tories, and to the contumelious and vacillating Whigs, who dislike or despise the Church, and seem to care for the State only so far as they are striving—without hope, I honestly believe—to get the management of it? As to the low-bred and headstrong Radicals, they are not worth a thought. Now my politics used always to impel me more or less to look out for co-operation, with a view to embody them in action. Of this interest I feel myself utterly deprived, and the subject, as matter of reflection, languishes accordingly. Cool heads, no doubt, there are, in the country, but moderation naturally keeps out of sight; and, wanting associates, I am less of an Englishman than I once was, or could wish to be. Show me that you excuse this egotism, if you can excuse it, by turning

into the same path, when I have the pleasure again to hear from you.

It would probably be wasting paper to mention Southey, as no doubt you hear from him. I saw Mrs. S. and four of his children the other day ; two of the girls most beautiful creatures. The eldest daughter is with her father in town. S. preserves excellent health, and, except that his hair is grizzled, a juvenile appearance, with more of youthful spirits than most men. He appears to be accumulating books in a way that, with my weak eyes, appals me. A large box of them has just strayed into my house through a blunder in the conveyance.

Pray be so good as to let me know what you think of Dante. It has become lately—owing a good deal, I believe, to the example of Schlegel—the fashion to extol him above measure. I have not read him for many years ; his style I used to think admirable for conciseness and vigour, without abruptness ; but I own that his fictions often struck me as offensively grotesque and fantastic, and I felt the poem tedious from various causes.

I have a strong desire to become acquainted with the Mr. Hare whom you mention. To the honour of Cambridge, he is in the highest repute there, for his sound and extensive learning. I am happy to say that the Master of Trinity College, my brother, was the occasion of his being restored to the Muses from the Temple. To Mr. Hare's brother, Augustus, I am under great obligation for having volunteered the tuition of my elder son, who is at New College, Oxford, and who, though he is not a youth of quick parts, promises, from his assiduity and passionate love of classical literature, to become an excellent scholar. . . .—Believe me, ever sincerely and affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH."

In the Forster Collection at South Kensington, there is a volume of MS. letters from Southey to Landor, and at the end



of one of them, dated December 11, 1824, there is the following letter from Wordsworth, also to Landor :—

“MY DEAR SIR,—I have begged this space from S., which I hope you will forgive, as I might not otherwise for some time have courage to thank you for your admirable *Dialogues*. They reached me last May, at a time when I was able to read them, which I did with very great pleasure ; I was in London then, and have been a wanderer most of the time since. But this did not keep me silent ; I was deterred by a consciousness that I could not write what I wished. I concur with you in so much, and differ with you in so much also, that, though I could have easily disposed, I believe, of my assent—easily and most pleasantly—I could not face the task of giving my reasons for my dissent. For instance, it would have required almost a pamphlet to set forth the grounds upon which I disagreed with what you have put into the mouth of Franklin on Irish affairs, the object to my mind of constant anxiety. What would I not give for a few hours’ talk with you upon Republics, Kings, and Priests and Priest-craft ? This last I abhor ; but why spend our time in declaiming against it ? Better endeavour to improve priests, whom one cannot, and ought not therefore endeavour to do without. We have far more to dread from those who would endeavour to expel not only organised religion, but all religion, from society, than from those who are slavishly disposed to uphold it ; at least I cannot help feeling so. Your *Dialogues* are worthy of you, and great acquisitions to literature. The classical ones I like best, and most of all that between Sully and his brother. That which pleases me the least is the one between yourself and the Abbé de Lille. The observations are just, I own, but they are fitter for illustrative notes than the body of a Dialogue, which ought always to have some little spice of dramatic effect. I long for the third volume. . . . I sent a message of thanks through Julius Hare, whom I saw at

Cambridge in May last.—Ever affectionately and gratefully
yours,
W. WORDSWORTH."

In May 1824, Dorothy Wordsworth went with her brother to Cambridge, on a visit to her brother, the Master of Trinity. Thence she went with Mrs. Luff to Playford Hall, near Ipswich, where their friends the Clarksons lived; and it was from their house that Dorothy wrote to Crabb Robinson about her Journal of the Continental Tour of 1820. In the same letter she said:—

"... My brother was well and in good spirits at Cambridge, and we all enjoyed our visit there very much. The weather was delightful the first week. Then came the flood—a new scene for us, and very amusing. On the Sunday, when the sun shone out again, the Cam, seen from the Castle Hill, resembled one of the lake-like reaches of the Rhine. The damage was, I fear, very great to the farmers; but though the University grounds were completely overflowed up to Trinity Library, in the course of four days most of the damage was repaired.

I think we shall remain here about a fortnight longer. We intend to stay two nights at Cambridge, two in Leicestershire, two in Yorkshire; and, after that, one day's journey, a night spent at Kendal, and a three hours' ride before breakfast will take us to Rydal Mount. . . .—Truly yours,

D. WORDSWORTH."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

TOUR IN WALES—CORRESPONDENCE, 1824-1827.

IN April 1824, Wordsworth was in London. Henry Crabb Robinson records, under date 19th April 1824:—

“At Monkhouse’s I met Wordsworth and Edward Irving together. Wordsworth stated that the pressing difficulty on his mind had always been to reconcile the prescience of the Almighty with accountability in man. I stated mine to be the incompatibility of final and absolute evil with the Divine supremacy. Irving did not pretend to answer either objection. He was no metaphysician, he said, and knew no more of God than was revealed. This did not meet, but evaded the difficulty. The poet he felt to be too great to be angry with, and he seemed to take no offence even with me. . . .

An anecdote probably belongs to this year (1824), though I have not found it in my Journal, and have but an imperfect recollection of it. The incident was amusing when it occurred. Wordsworth and Lady Morgan were invited to dine at—I forget whose house. The poet would on no account take her downstairs; and he disturbed the table arrangements by placing himself at the bottom, when her ladyship was at the top. She was either unobserving of his conduct, or resolved to show him she did not care for it; for she sent the servant to beg him to drink a glass of wine with her. His look was as solemn as if it had been a death-summons. This I saw. I

was told she asked her neighbour, 'Has not Mr. Wordsworth written some poems?'"

Robinson tells us that Ludwig Tieck was on a visit to England during this year, and that he read to him two of Wordsworth's sonnets, when Tieck remarked, "Das ist ein Englischer Goethe."

In August 1824, Wordsworth made a tour in North Wales with his wife and daughter. They were absent from Rydal nearly three months. It was during this year—and possibly during the tour in Wales—that the lines were addressed to Mrs. Wordsworth, which perhaps rival those written of her in her youth, the lines beginning

O dearer far than life and light are dear,

and

Let other bards of angels sing.

Memorial poems followed, bearing on the Welsh Tour. The following is Wordsworth's own account of the tour, written to Sir George Beaumont:—

“*Hindwell, Radnor, Sept. 20, 1824.*”

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE,—After a three weeks' ramble in North Wales, Mrs. Wordsworth, Dora, and myself are set down quietly here for three weeks more. The weather has been delightful, and everything to our wishes. On a beautiful day we took the steam-packet at Liverpool, passed the mouth of the Dee, coasted the extremity of the Vale of Clwyd, sailed close under Great Orme's Head, had a noble prospect of Penmaenmawr, and, having almost touched upon Puffin's Island, we reached Bangor Ferry, a little after six in the afternoon. We admired the stupendous preparations for the bridge over the Menai; and breakfasted next morning at Carnarvon. We employed several hours in exploring the interior of the noble castle, and looking at it from different points of view in the

neighbourhood. At half-past four we departed for Llanberis, having fine views (as we looked back) of Carnarvon Castle, the sea, and Anglesey. A little before sunset we came in sight of Llanberis Lake, Snowdon, and all the craggy hills and mountains surrounding it; the foreground a beautiful contrast to this grandeur and desolation—a green sloping hollow, furnishing a shelter for one of the most beautiful collections of lowly Welsh cottages, with thatched roofs, overgrown with plants, anywhere to be met with. The hamlet is called Cwm-y-glo, and here we took boat, while the solemn lights of evening were receding towards the tops of the mountains. As we advanced, Dolbarden Castle came in view, and Snowdon opened upon our admiration. It was almost dark when we reached the quiet and comfortable inn at Llanberis.

.

There being no carriage-road, we undertook to walk by the Pass of Llanberis, eight miles, to Capel Curig. This proved fatiguing, but it was the only oppressive exertion we made during the course of our tour. We arrived at Capel Curig in time for a glance at the Snowdonian range, from the garden of the inn, in connection with the lake (or rather pool) reflecting the crimson clouds of evening. The outline of Snowdon is perhaps seen nowhere to more advantage than from this place. Next morning, five miles down a beautiful valley to the banks of the Conway, which stream we followed to Llanrwst; but the day was so hot that we could only make use of the morning and evening. Here we were joined, according to previous arrangement, by Bishop Hobart, of New York, who remained with us till two o'clock next day, and left us to complete his hasty tour through North and South Wales. In the afternoon my old college friend and youthful companion among the Alps, the Rev. R. Jones, arrived, and in his car we all proceeded to the Falls of the Conway, thence up that river to a newly-erected inn on the Irish road, where we lodged; having

passed through bold and rocky scenery along the banks of a stream which is a feeder of the Dee. Next morning we turned from the Irish road three or four miles to visit the 'Valley of Meditation' (Glyn Mavyr), where Mr. Jones has, at present, a curacy, with a comfortable parsonage. We slept at Corwen, and went down the Dee to Llangollen, which you and dear Lady B. know well. Called upon the celebrated recluses, who hoped that you and Lady B. had not forgotten them; they certainly had not forgotten you, and they begged us to say that they retained a lively remembrance of you both. We drank tea, and passed a couple of hours with them in the evening, having visited the aqueduct over the Dee, and Chirk Castle, in the afternoon. Lady E. has not been well, and has suffered much in her eyes, but she is surprisingly lively for her years. Miss P. is apparently in unimpaired health. Next day I sent them the following sonnet from Ruthin, which was conceived, and in a great measure composed, in their grounds—

A stream to mingle with your favourite Dee
Along the *Vale of Meditation* flows.

.

We passed three days with Mr. Jones's friends in the vale of Clwyd, looking about us; and on the Tuesday set off again, accompanied by our friend, to complete our tour. We dined at Conway, walked to Benarth, the view from which is a good deal choked up with wood. A small part of the castle has been demolished, for the sake of the new road to communicate with the suspension bridge, which they are about to make to the small island opposite the castle, to be connected by a long embankment with the opposite shore. The bridge will, I think, prove rather ornamental, when time has taken off the newness of its supporting masonry; but the mound deplorably impairs the majesty of the water at high-tide; in fact it destroys its lake-like appearance. Our drive to Aber in the

evening was charming; sun setting in glory. We had also a delightful walk next morning up the vale of Aber, terminated by a lofty waterfall, not much in itself, but most striking as a closing accompaniment to the secluded valley. Here, in the early morning, I saw an odd sight—fifteen milkmaids together, laden with their brimming pails. How cheerful and happy they appeared! and not a little inclined to joke, after the manner of the pastoral persons in Theocritus. That day brought us to Capel Curig again, after a charming drive up the banks of the Ogwen, having previously had beautiful views of Bangor, the sea, and its shipping. From Capel Curig we went down the justly celebrated vale of Nant Gwynant to Bethgelert. In this vale are two small lakes, the higher of which is the only Welsh lake which has any pretensions to compare with our own; and it has one great advantage over them, that it remains wholly free from intrusive objects. We saw it early in the morning; and with the greenness of the meadows at its head, the steep rocks on one of its shores, and the bold mountains at *both* extremities—a feature almost peculiar to itself—it appeared to us truly enchanting. The village of Bethgelert is much altered for the worse: new and formal houses have, in a great measure, supplanted the old rugged and tufted cottages, and a smart hotel has taken the place of the lowly public-house, in which I took refreshment almost thirty years ago, previous to a midnight ascent to the summit of Snowdon. At B. we were agreeably surprised by the appearance of Mr. Hare, of New College, Oxford. We slept at Tan-y-bwlch, having employed the afternoon in exploring the beauties of the vale of Festiniog. Next day to Barmouth, whence, the following morning, we took boat and rowed up its sublime estuary, which may compare with the finest of Scotland, having the advantage of a superior climate. From Dolgelly we went to Tal-y-llyn, a solitary and very interesting lake under Cader Idris. Next day, being Sunday, we heard service

performed in Welsh, and in the afternoon went part of the way down a beautiful valley to Machynlleth, next morning to Aberystwith, and up the Rhydiol to the Devil's Bridge, where we passed the following day in exploring those two rivers, and Hafod in the neighbourhood. I had seen these things long ago, but either my memory, or my powers of observation, had not done them justice. It rained heavily in the night, and we saw the waterfalls in perfection. While Dora was attempting to make a sketch from the chasm in the rain, I composed by her side the following address to the torrent :—

How art thou named ? In search of what strange land,
From what huge height descending ? Can such force
Of water issue from a British source ? *etc.*

Next day, viz. last Wednesday, we reached this place. . . . I hope to see Mr. Price at Foxley, in a few days. Mrs. Wordsworth's brother is about to change his present residence for a farm close by Foxley. . . .”

On the 13th December Dorothy Wordsworth wrote to Crabb Robinson :—

“ My brother and sister, with their daughter, arrived at home a month ago after an absence of eleven and a half weeks. Their tour in North Wales was delightful—much surpassing remembrance and expectation ; to my brother the ground had been familiar in the days of his youth, but all was new to the females. They spent five weeks among their friends in Herefordshire and Radnorshire, and bore away one great consolation in parting from Thomas Monkhouse, as they all feared for the last time, that he had been cheated out of many a melancholy thought by their presence. My brother's society was an especial comfort to him. Two days before *our* travellers left Wales, the sick man had set off for Torquay with his wife and child and

Miss Hutchinson. . . . My brother and Dora were at Keswick for four days last week. Southey is in his usual good spirits, happy in his various employments. Sara Coleridge is busy correcting proofs; she has translated a book from the French, either written by the Chevalier Bayard, or by some other person concerning him and his times, I know not which. Cuthbert Southey is a clever boy, and I hope it will please God to preserve him for the comfort and delight of his poor father, whose loss seemed irreparable when Herbert (then his only son) died. Mrs. Coleridge, Mrs. Southey, and the rest of the family are well. . . . My brother has not yet looked at the *Recluse*; he seems to feel the task so weighty that he shrinks from beginning with it, yet knows that he has now no time to loiter if another great work is to be accomplished by him. I say another, for I consider the *Excursion* as one work, though the title-page tells that it is but a *part* of one that has another title. . . . I hardly think my brother will stir away from Rydal next summer; yet he sometimes hints at going into Ireland, and says when he *does* go he will take me along with him. But we have all been such wanderers during the last twelve months, that the pleasantest thought at present is that of being gathered together at home, and all quietly enjoying ourselves. There is no country that suffers so little as this in bad weather, none that has so much of beauty (and more than beauty) in the winter season; and at Rydal Mount especially we are favoured, having the sun right before our windows both at his rising and setting. My brother, who is famous for providing opportunities for his friends to do him a service, desires me to ask you to be so good as to inquire what is the present price of shares in the Rock Insurance."

Again, on July 2, 1825, she wrote to Robinson, urging him to come to Rydal Mount, and Scotland. She then spoke of "a much grander scheme they had in view, for which all our

savings must be heaped up—no less than spending a whole winter in Italy, and a whole summer in moving about from place to place, in Switzerland and elsewhere, not neglecting the Tyrol. John Wordsworth will have finished at Oxford at the close of the year '26, and we talk, if it can be accomplished, of setting out in the spring of '27, and in our day-dreams you always make one of the company. I really speak seriously; such is our plan. But even supposing life, health, and strength are continued to us, there will still be difficulties—the Stamp Office, the house, home, and other concerns to be taken care of, etc. None of these difficulties, however, appear to be insurmountable; so you *must* go to the Highlands, on purpose to come back by this road to plan with my brother, to give us estimates of expenses, and to enable us to settle a hundred things. My brother fancies that he might almost make the journey cost nothing by residing *two* years abroad; but that is too long a period to enter into the first scheme, especially for a Government Agent.”

In November 8th of the same year she added:—“ . . . I have stayed at home all summer, and have had an agreeable lot, and the weather has been better than was ever known, and I have had health and strength to allow me to take long walks, which (especially upon the mountains) are as delightful to my feelings as ever in my younger days. My sister has been ten weeks absent. She accompanied Mrs. Thomas Hutchinson to Harrogate, stayed some time there, and met her husband and sister at Sir G. Beaumont’s.”

At this stage we may as well follow Dorothy Wordsworth’s subsequent journeys in 1826. Early in February she left Rydal, and went to visit her brother and his family in their new home at Brinsop Court, Herefordshire. She wrote thence to Crabb Robinson, on the 25th of February:—“Here I arrived yesterday week, having parted from my brother and his daughter at Kendal just ten days before. I halted a few

days at Manchester with Miss Jewsbury, the authoress of *Phantasmagoria*, etc., and was even more pleased with her at home than abroad. Her talents are extraordinary ; and she is admirable as a daughter and sister, and has besides many valuable friends, to some of whom I was introduced. From Manchester I came by way of Worcester, and the delightful Hills of Malvern, to Hereford, where I was met by Mrs. Wordsworth's sister. Brinsop Court is six miles from Hereford, the country rich, and climate good—far less rain than we have in Westmoreland ; but, as I have always said, our compensations do much more than make amends, our dry roads, where, after the heaviest shower, one can walk with comfort,—and, above all, our mountains and lakes, which are just as beautiful, just as interesting, in winter as in summer. Brinsop Court is, however, even now no cheerless spot ; and flowers in the hedges and blossoms, in the numerous orchards, will soon make it gay. Our fireside is enlivened by four fine well-managed children and cheerful friends, and Mrs. Hutchinson is one of the most pleasing and excellent of women, the sister of our good friend Thomas Monkhouse. . . .”

She writes thus on her brother's fortune as an author :—
“ My brother hitherto has been most fortunate. While people are suffering losses on all sides, he has wholly escaped. . . . I shall remain in Herefordshire till May, if nothing unforeseen happens. My brother talks of meeting me in North Wales, and going with me to the top of Snowdon ; but I do not much depend on his being able to leave home. At all events, the time of his coming will be governed by the time of the general election.”

To Robinson, Wordsworth wrote in April of the same year :—“ Do not go on to the Continent. You may carve out a much more interesting tour by taking the best part of North Wales—and our glorious country !—on your way to Ireland, and return from the North, having seen the Giant's Causeway,

by Staffa and Iona, to us. Your account of your own sister is very melancholy ; but let us bear in mind that to the really pious no affliction comes amiss. A religion like hers is worth all the other knowledge in the world a thousand times told. As to Italy, it seems to fly from me and mine, as it did from Æneas and his companions of old."

In August, he sent, by his daughter Dora, the following advice to Robinson as to a journey in Wales :—"From Llanberis mount Snowdon, and descend to Dolbarden Inn in the Vale of Llanberis, and by the lake to the romantic village of Cwm-y-Glo, whence to Carnarvon, Bangor, and Holy Head for Ireland ; this will have shown you most of the finest things in N. and S. Wales ; but with the exception, observe, of Conway Castle—a most magnificent thing—and the whole line of the great road to Ireland from Llangollen, including Capel Curig to Bangor, which would leave your knowledge of N. W. very imperfect."

After leaving Brinsop, Dorothy Wordsworth went with Miss Jewsbury to Leamington, Warwick, and Ashby, and walked out to Coleorton. She kept a Journal as usual, in which there is the same minute chronicle of weather changes, and daily ongoings. She tells us of the books she read at Coleorton, where she spent much time in reading to the Beaumonts *The Fairy Queen*, old plays, Diderot's *éloge* on Richardson, *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, etc. This is a sample of her jottings :—"The sun rose like a golden ball, flashing light to the west, clouds followed, and a little rain. Walked with Lady Beaumont to the quarry, lingered in the winter garden, and read *Hamlet*."

She returned to Rydal in October 1826.

In the autumn of the same year, Henry Crabb Robinson paid a visit to Rydal Mount, after his tour in Ireland, and he writes thus of a walk which he took with Wordsworth on October 6th :—"It was over Loughrigg Fell, by Loughrigg

Tarn, down to Grasmere Lake, and back by Rydal Water. It was during this morning's walk that I ascertained the cause of the superiority of the English lake scenery over that of Killarney. It lies in the broken surface of the sides of the mountains, whence arises a magical display of colours, ever mixed and ever changing. The summits of the mountains of Killarney are as finely varied as possible, but the sides are smooth, little diversified by crags, or by various herbage, though frequently wooded. In this morning's walk nothing could surpass the various play of colours, and the wild variety of the scenery, yet the day was by no means fine, though agreeable. . . . Wordsworth showed me the field he has purchased, on which he means to build, should he be compelled to leave the Mount. He also pointed out to my notice the beautiful spring, a description of which is to be an introduction to a portion of his great poem, containing a poetical view of water as an element in the composition of our globe."

In the narrative of the *Life of Alaric Watts*, by his son, published in 1884, there are many minute details in reference to Wordsworth and Coleridge, and several of their letters to Watts. It is thus that the son, Alaric Alfred Watts, describes his father's first acquaintance with Wordsworth :— *

"The success of my father's negotiations on behalf of Miss Jewsbury, as detailed in a former chapter, was naturally communicated by her to her kind friend and well-wisher, Mr. Wordsworth, whose acquaintance my parents made at this time through her introduction. This circumstance, coupled with some expressions of his readiness to be of any service to the poet, in relation to literary matters in London, led to his being favoured with another commission of a similar nature,

* See *Alaric Watts*, vol. i. pp. 235-242.

which it was not his good fortune to bring to so successful an issue. This was to find for Mr. Wordsworth an enterprising and liberal publisher for a new edition of his poetical works, the edition of the Miscellaneous 'Poems,' published in four volumes in 1820, being now out of print, or nearly so, and the publishers not being, as it would seem, very sanguine about adventuring, at all events on such terms as would content the poet, on another edition.

The correspondence on this subject is interesting, as showing the degree of progress which the poetry of Wordsworth had attained, up to that date, in the estimation of the general public, tested by the irrefragable evidence of demand and supply. From Mr. Wordsworth's letters it appears that this edition of the 'Poems' (which did not include the *Excursion*) consisted of five hundred copies; that nearly three hundred of these were disposed of immediately, by which the first expenses of printing, publishing, and advertising had been covered; that about one hundred and fifty more had been got rid of up to 1824, but that this had been effected only by so considerable an expenditure for advertisements as left the author little profit; and that, when no cost was incurred on this head, the profit would be about £50 on every hundred copies sold without it.

Mr. Wordsworth's wish was to obtain £300 for the right of printing one thousand copies of a new edition, including the *Excursion*; but no publisher had been found willing to give such a sum.

My father had opened negotiations with Hurst and Robinson, and was endeavouring to extract a liberal proposal from them, when some circumstances which came to his knowledge led him to suspect that all might not be quite safe in that quarter; and after some correspondence and interviews with Mr. Robinson on the subject, he had deemed it prudent to hold his hand. He was thus placed in a position of some

embarrassment between the two, as he did not feel himself at liberty to disclose what it was that occasioned the delay, and Mr. Wordsworth was urging him for a definite answer, which he was not in a position to give. Mrs. Wordsworth, indeed, in her anxiety to see the matter settled, pressed him hard on her own account. The reason she gives for being so urgent is worth a passing notice. 'Nothing short,' she says, after expressing her regrets at having to be so persistent, 'of the peculiar injury which the delay occasions to Mr. Wordsworth—by giving him time to tease and exhaust himself by attempting needless corrections, or, at least, what we presume to consider such—could justify my having expressed myself so strongly.'

My father, whose position in the matter was certainly not an enviable one, kept his own counsel, until the crash of January 1826 revealed the mystery.

Of my parents' intercourse with Wordsworth, my mother has left the following notes, made at my request in later life:—

'We made the acquaintance of Mr. Wordsworth on the occasion of a visit to Miss Jewsbury at Manchester, in the year 1824 or 1825. Of the various portraits which have been published of him, one painted by Mr. Carruthers, and engraved for Galignani's edition of his poems, issued in Paris in 1828, reminds me more of the poet, as I remember him, than any other. I recall an evening passed in his society on this occasion in which we discussed poetry, and he repeated to me, at my request, some of his sonnets. I happened to quote some lines from Coleridge's *Christabel*. He did not dissent from my expressions of admiration of this poem, but rather discomposed me by observing that it was an indelicate poem, a defect which it had never suggested itself to me to associate with it. I was, perhaps, the less prepared for a censure of such a description on his friend Coleridge, as he had just

before been talking of Burns—to some of whose writings it might certainly have applied—in terms of cordial admiration. From this, and some other characteristics of his criticism, I could not forbear the impression that his sympathies were rather with his predecessors than his contemporaries. I observed that he rarely left a commendation of the latter wholly unqualified; so that the effect of his criticism seemed to be rather to qualify mercy with justice than, as I should rather have preferred, to temper justice with mercy. I could have imagined him born, like Charles Lamb's Hester,

Of those who held the Quaker rule,
That doth the human feelings cool,
Though he was trained in Nature's school,
And Nature blessed him ;

for he reminded me not infrequently of some of the older male members of the Society of Friends whom I had known in my youth.

Of his own poems he expressed himself with a confidence not unlikely to be misunderstood by strangers, who might not have had the opportunity of knowing the entire singleness and sincerity of his nature. He asked me what I thought the finest elegiac composition in the language; and when I diffidently suggested *Lycidas*, he replied, 'You are not far wrong. It may, I think, be affirmed that Milton's *Lycidas*, and my *Laodamia* are twin immortals.' I admired *Laodamia*, and was quite willing that so it should be.

Indeed, it was difficult to differ from him on any question of poetical criticism. He delivered judgment on such matters 'as one having authority,' reasoning, as it seemed to me, from some clearly defined principle in his mind, with which the opinion was in accord, so as to be beyond question; and as though it were his duty to lay down the law as he found it, without fear, favour, or affection. I was much struck by the spirit of rectitude which seemed to animate the expression of

every opinion he uttered. He spoke always as though he were upon oath.

He was a patient and courteous listener, paying the most scrupulous attention to every word, never interrupting, and with a certain fixedness of his clear grey eyes, which made me feel that, whatever one's opinion might be, one must be prepared to give a substantial reason for it, and, in doing so, to discard all that might appear fanciful, and not to be readily explained.

We had the pleasure, at a later period, of receiving Mr. Wordsworth at our residence in London; and we also visited him at the house of his son-in-law, Mr. Quillinan, to whom he had given, some time before, a letter of introduction to us, and whom we liked extremely.

The poet at that time had just received a visit from a young American lady, who claimed to be a great admirer of his; but who had profited, nevertheless, so imperfectly by his philosophy as to have announced to him that she was one of the richest girls in the States, and didn't intend to marry anybody lower in rank than a duke. He raised a smile from us all by characterising his admirer as 'rather a tumultuous young woman.'

From the letters which Wordsworth wrote to Alaric Watts, few extracts need be given. On the 16th November 1824, he wrote from Rydal Mount:—

" . . . I am disposed strenuously to recommend to your habitual perusal the great poets of our own country, who have stood the test of ages. Shakespeare I need not name, nor Milton, but Chaucer and Spenser are apt to be overlooked. It is almost painful to think how far these surpass all others." *

On August 13, 1825, he wrote from Lowther Castle:—"I do not wish to dispose of the copyright of my works. The value of works of imagination it is impossible to predict." †

Ample details of Wordsworth's negotiations with his several

* See the *Life of Alaric Watts*, vol. i. p. 200.

† Vol. i. p. 283.

publishers will be found in his letters to Henry Crabb Robinson, published in vol. viii. of the Wordsworth Society *Transactions*. They need not be repeated here.

The Wordsworths had been told before this time, by the proprietors of Rydal, that the Mount might be required by them for another tenant; and, to be prepared for all eventualities, Wordsworth spent part of what he received for the 1820 edition of his poems in the purchase of a small field below the Mount—he called it “Dora’s Field”—that he might there build a house, if he should ever leave the home now endeared to him by many associations.

On May 28, 1825, he wrote a letter from Rydal to Sir George Beaumont, which concludes with one of the finest sentences he ever penned. After referring to the delightful spring they had had, “in this bright and fragrant season of fresh green leaves and blossoms,” he says:—“Never, I think, have we had so beautiful a spring; sunshine and showers coming just as if they had been called for, by the spirits of Hope, Love, and Beauty. This spot is at present a paradise, if you will admit the term when I acknowledge that yesterday afternoon the mountains were whitened with a fall of snow. But this only served to give the landscape, with all its verdure, blossoms, and leafy trees, a striking Swiss air, which reminded us of Unterseen and Interlachen.” He says he never had a higher relish for the beauties of Nature than during this spring, nor enjoyed himself more, and adds, “Theologians may puzzle their heads about dogmas as they will, the religion of gratitude cannot mislead us. Of that we are sure; and gratitude is the handmaid to hope, and hope the harbinger of faith. I look abroad upon Nature, I think of the best part of our Species, I lean upon my Friends, and I meditate upon the Scriptures, especially the Gospel of St. John, and my creed rises up of itself, with the ease of an exhalation, yet a fabric of adamant.—God bless you, my ever dear friend.

W. WORDSWORTH.”

A letter from Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Marshall, dated Rydal Mount, December 23, 1825, tells its own tale about their family anxieties.

“Have you heard the sad news of our intended dismissal from Rydal Mount? I think you will recollect my telling you, when last at Hallsteads, that another year had been granted; though, at the same time, with a warning that Mrs. Huddleston might want the place. This we thought little of, and considered it almost as good as secure possession; Mrs. Huddleston having expressly said that she neither wished to leave Temple Sowerby, nor to live here. But through the Crackenthorpes (not to speak of general rumour) we were informed that Mrs. Huddleston did really intend to live at Rydal Mount. My brother took his resolution immediately (he and all of us being so unwilling to leave Rydal), and purchased a piece of land on which to build a house; and the next morning wrote to Lady Fleming to know if the reports were true, and informing her of his intentions (in case it were true), that Rydal Mount would, as reported, be wanted for Mrs. Huddleston. He then told her that he much preferred staying here, apologised for applying so long before the time, and added that his excuse must be the necessity of making preparations for building, that his family might not be without a house to remove to. Lady Fleming’s answer was a verbal one that Mrs. Huddleston was coming in 1827. The piece of land which my brother has bought is just below Rydal Mount, between the chapel and Mr. Tillbrook’s, commanding a view as fine as from our house.

Well, if the dwelling which Dora has already sketched upon paper would ‘rise like an exhalation,’ without expense or trouble, I should comparatively be little distressed at the thought of leaving Rydal Mount. We would still have the command of most of those objects so long endeared to us; but the expense, the trouble, and the anxiety are awful. Yet I

tell William (the Patterdale estate * paying such poor interest for the money it cost) if he could sell *that*, he might feel himself not much poorer (considering the present rent of Rydal Mount) than at present. It strikes me as possible that Mr. Marshall might wish to buy this little estate as lying near his property in Patterdale. Pray, with my kind regards, mention this little hint to him. I am sure my brother would be willing to sell, if it could be done advantageously. Still, however, we have a hope we may be allowed to stay where we are; that Mrs. H. (who, we know, must have unwillingly yielded to importunity in giving her consent) may change her mind—that her son may dissuade her—or that something may happen to prevent her coming. We think that in such case Lady Fleming cannot be so cruel as to turn us away. Besides, even if she has a particular dislike to us as tenants, it would not be less disagreeable to have us as neighbours, in a house of our own, so close to her chapel and her hall. . . .

Do not forget my message to Mr. Marshall. It would indeed be a relief to my mind, if (in case my brother does build) that property were sold to meet the expense.”

The cause of the disagreement between the Wordsworths and the Flemings, which led the former to fear that they might have to leave the Mount, was probably too insignificant to search for, and certainly too slight to dwell upon. They did not leave their home. The only thing worthy of record in connection with the matter is, that the fear of being dispossessed led Wordsworth to write the following lines:—

COMPOSED WHEN A PROBABILITY EXISTED OF OUR BEING OBLIGED
TO QUIT RYDAL MOUNT AS A RESIDENCE.

The doubt to which a wavering hope had clung
Is fled; we must depart, willing or not;
Sky-piercing Hills! must bid farewell to you

* See p. 32, etc.

And all that ye look down upon with pride,
With tenderness, embosom ; to your paths,
And pleasant dwellings, to familiar trees
And wild-flowers known as well as if our hands
Had tended them : and O pellucid Spring !
Unheard of, save in one small hamlet, here
Not undistinguished, for of wells that ooze
Or founts that gurgle from yon craggy steep,
Their common sire, thou only bear'st his name.
Insensibly the foretaste of this parting
Hath ruled my steps, and seals me to thy side,
Mindful that thou (ah ! wherefore by my Muse
So long unthanked) hast cheered a simple board
With beverage pure as ever fixed the choice
Of hermit, dubious where to scoop his cell ;
Which Persian kings might envy ; and thy meek
And gentle aspect oft hast ministered
To finer uses. They for me must cease ;
Days will pass on, the year, if years be given,
Fade,—and the moralising mind derive
No lessons from the presence of a Power
By the inconstant nature we inherit
Unmatched in delicate beneficence ;
For neither unremitting rains avail
To swell thee into voice ; nor longest drought
Thy bounty stints, nor can thy beauty mar,
Beauty not therefore wanting change to stir
The fancy pleased by spectacles unlooked for.

Nor yet, perchance, translucent Spring, had tolled
The Norman curfew bell when human hands
First offered help that the deficient rock
Might overarch thee, from pernicious heat
Defended, and appropriate to man's need.
Such ties will not be severed : but, when we

Are gone, what summer loiterer will regard,
Inquisitive, thy countenance, will peruse,
Pleased to detect the dimpling stir of life,
The breathing faculty with which thou yield'st
(Tho' a mere goblet to the careless eye)
Boons inexhaustible? Who, hurrying on
With a step quickened by November's cold,
Shall pause, the skill admiring that can work
Upon thy chance-defilements—withered twigs
That, lodged within thy crystal depths, seem bright,
As if they from a silver tree had fallen—
And oaken leaves that, driven by whirling blasts,
Sunk down, and lay immersed in dead repose
For Time's invisible tooth to prey upon
Unsightly objects and uncoveted,
Till thou with crystal bead-drops didst encrust
Their skeletons, turned to brilliant ornaments.
But, from thy bosom, should some venturous* hand
Abstract those gleaming relics, and uplift them,
However gently, toward the vulgar air,
At once their tender brightness disappears,
Leaving the intermeddler to upbraid
His folly. Thus (I feel it while I speak),
Thus, with the fibres of these thoughts it fares;
And oh! how much, of all that love creates
Or beautifies, like changes undergo,
Suffers like loss when drawn out of the soul,
Its silent laboratory! Words should say
(Could they depict the marvels of thy cell)
How often I have marked a plummy fern
From the live rock with grace inimitable
Bending its apex toward a paler self
Reflected all in perfect lineaments—

* The ms. has a second reading, "covetous hand."

Shadow and substance kissing point to point
In mutual stillness ; or, if some faint breeze
Entering the cell gave restlessness to one,
The other, glassed in thy unruffled breast,
Partook of every motion, met, retired,
And met again. Such playful sympathy,
Such delicate caress as in the shape
Of this green plant had aptly recompensed
For baffled lips and disappointed arms
And hopeless pangs, the spirit of that youth,
The fair Narcissus by some pitying God
Changed to a crimson flower ; when he, whose pride
Provoked a retribution too severe,
Had pined ; upon his watery duplicate
Wasting that love the nymphs implored in vain.

Thus while my Fancy wanders, thou, clear Spring,
Moved (shall I say ?) like a dear friend who meets
A parting moment with her loveliest look,
And seemingly her happiest, look so fair
It frustrates its own purpose, and recalls
The grieved one whom it meant to send away—
Dost tempt me by disclosures exquisite
To linger, bending over thee : for now,
What witchcraft, mild enchantress, may with thee
Compare ! thy earthly bed a moment past
Palpable to sight as the dry ground,
Eludes perception, not by rippling air
Concealed, nor through effect of some impure
Upstirring ; but, abstracted by a charm
Of my own cunning, earth mysteriously
From under thee hath vanished, and slant beams
The silent inquest of a western sun,
Assisting, lucid well-spring ! Thou revealest
Communion without check of herbs and flowers,

And the vault's hoary sides to which they cling,
Imaged in downward show ; the flower, the herbs,*
These not of earthly texture, and the vault
Not *there* diminutive, but through a scale
Of vision less and less distinct, descending
To gloom imperishable. So (if truths
The highest condescend to be set forth
By processes minute), even so—when thought
Wins help from something greater than herself—
Is the firm basis of habitual sense
Supplanted, not for treacherous vacancy
And blank dissociation from a world
We love, but that the residues of flesh,
Mirrored, yet not too strictly, may refine
To Spirit ; for the idealising Soul
Time wears the features of Eternity ;
And Nature deepens into Nature's God.

Millions of kneeling Hindoos at this day
Bow to the watery element, adored
In their vast stream, and if an age hath been
(As books and haply votive altars vouch)
When British floods were worshipped, some faint trace
Of that idolatry, through monkish rites
Transmitted far as living memory,
Might wait on thee, a silent monitor,
On thee, bright Spring, a bashful little one,
Yet to the measure of thy promises
True, as the mightiest ; upon thee, sequestered
For meditation, nor inopportune
For social interest such as I have shared.
Peace to the sober matron who shall dip
Her pitcher here at early dawn, by me
No longer greeted—to the tottering sire,

* In MS. also "its herbs."

For whom like service, now and then his choice,
Relieves the tedious holiday of age—
Thoughts raised above the Earth while here he sits
Feeding on sunshine—to the blushing girl
Who here forgets her errand, nothing loth
To be waylaid by her betrothed, peace
And pleasure sobered down to happiness !

But should these hills be ranged by one whose soul
Scorning love-whispers shrinks from love itself
As Fancy's snare for female vanity,
Here may the aspirant find a trysting-place
For loftier intercourse. The Muses crowned
With wreaths that have not faded to this hour
Sprung from high Jove, of sage Mnemosyne
Enamoured, so the fable runs ; but they
Certes were self-taught damsels, scattered births
Of many a Grecian vale, who sought not praise,
And, heedless even of listeners, warbled out
Their own emotions given to mountain air
In notes which mountain echoes would take up
Boldly and bear away to softer life ;
Hence deified as sisters they were bound
Together in a never-dying choir ;
Who with their Hippocrene and grottoed fount
Of Castaly, attest that Woman's heart
Was in the limpid age of this stained world
The most assured seat of []
And new-born waters, deemed the happiest source
Of inspiration for the conscious lyre.

Lured by the crystal element in times
Stormy and fierce, the Maid of Arc withdrew
From human converse to frequent alone
The Fountain of the Fairies. What to her,
Smooth summer dreams, old favours of the place,

Pageant and revels of blithe elves—to her
Whose country groan'd under a foreign scourge ?
She pondered murmurs that attuned her ear
For the reception of far other sounds
Than their too happy minstrelsy,—a voice
Reached her with supernatural mandates charged
More awful than the chambers of dark earth
Have virtue to send forth. Upon the marge
Of the benignant fountain, while she stood
Gazing intensely, the translucent lymph
Darkened beneath the shadow of her thoughts
As if swift clouds swept o'er it, or caught
War's tincture, 'mid the forest green and still,
Turned into blood before her heart-sick eye.
Erelong, forsaking all her natural haunts,
All her accustomed offices and cares
Relinquishing, but treasuring every law
And grace of feminine humanity,
The chosen rustic urged a warlike steed
Toward the beleaguered city, in the might
Of prophecy, accoutred to fulfil,
At the sword's point, visions conceived in love.

The cloud of rooks descending through mid air
Softens its evening uproar towards a close
Near and more near ; for this protracted strain
A warning not unwelcome. Fare thee well !
Emblem of equanimity and truth,
Farewell !—if thy composure be not ours,
Yet as thou still when we are gone wilt keep
Thy living chaplet of fresh flowers and fern,
Cherished in shade though peeped at by the sun ;
So shall our bosoms feel a covert growth
Of grateful recollections, tribute due
To thy obscure and modest attributes
To thee, dear Spring, and all-sustaining Heaven !

Wordsworth's correspondence with Lord Lonsdale on local county politics shows that he had no mean business faculty, and that—although a very biassed, almost bigoted, Conservative—he was keenly alive to the best interests of the people, and a good man of affairs in striving to promote them. His prejudices came out only too prominently ; but they had all a root of goodness and truth. For example, he was—as we have seen—strongly opposed to the claims of the Roman Catholics for emancipation from the disabilities under which they had laboured. He resisted Canning's Bill, passed through the House of Commons in 1825, for giving relief to the Catholics, and wrote thus to Lord Lonsdale in May 1825 :—

“It rejoices me to see the Lowther name and the Lowther interest in the minority” [presumably in the House of Commons]. “I have not seen the reports of the evidence before Parliament—only certain extracts in newspapers, and passages quoted in the debates. But whatever may be the weight of such evidence, it cannot overbalance in my mind all that I have read in history, all that I have heard in conversation, and all that I have observed in life. As far as I can learn, it is in a great degree a measure *ex parte* ; but were not this so, I must own that, in a complex and subtle religious question as this is, I should reckon little of formal and dressed-up testimony, even upon oath, compared with what occurs in the regular course of life, and escapes from people in unguarded moments. Little value, then, can be put upon committee-evidence, contradicting (as here) men's opinions in their natural overflow. From what may be observed among the Irish and English Romanists, it is justly to be dreaded that there is a stronger disposition to approximate to their brethren in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and elsewhere, than to unite in faith and practice with us Protestants. . . .

The majority of the people of England are against con-

cession, as would have been proved had they been fairly appealed to, which was not done ; because the laity were unwilling to take the lead in a matter (notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary) eminently ecclesiastical ; and the clergy are averse from coming forward except in a corporate capacity, lest they should be accused of stirring up the people for selfish views ; and thus the real opinion of the nation is not embodied.

I ventured to originate a petition from the two parishes of Grasmere and Windermere, including the town of Ambleside. There were not half a dozen dissenting voices. . . .”

We find that Wordsworth at the same time shared in the objections raised against the proposed University College, London, which he regarded as a sort of seminary of revolutionary ideas and general unsettlement. In a letter to Lord Lonsdale in June 1825, he says :—

“ I hear that Mr. Marshall is a member of the London College Committee, and active in all the *improvements* now going forward. It cannot be doubted that a main motive with the leaders of this and similar institutions is to acquire influence for political purposes. Mr. Brougham mentions, as a strong inducement for founding the proposed College, that it will render medical education so much cheaper. It is clearly cheap enough. We have far more Doctors than can find patients to live by ; and I cannot see how Society will be benefited by swarms of medical practitioners starting up from lower classes in the community than they are now furnished by. The better able the parents are to incur expense, the stronger pledge have we of their children being above meanness, and unfeeling and sordid habits. As to teaching Belles Lettres, Languages, Law, Political Economy, Morals, etc., by lectures, it is absurd. Lecturers may be very useful in Experimental Philosophy, Geology, and Natural History, or any art or

science capable of illustration by experiments, operations, and specimens ; but in other departments of knowledge they are, in most cases, worse than superfluous. Of course I do not include in the above censure *college lectures*, as they are called, when the business consists not of haranguing the pupils, but in ascertaining the progress they have made."

It would be useless, in a biography of the Poet, to criticise the onesidedness, and even the prejudice, contained in this letter. The University of London, and University College, London, with other colleges, have abundantly justified their right to exist by the work they have accomplished, which has not only been a useful supplement to that of the two great English Universities, but has achieved a result which the latter could not possibly have done. The objection to teaching Philosophy, Literature, and Political Economy by lectures is also directly opposed to the best traditions of academic life in other lands, and the experience of centuries. The narrow and deeply-grooved political Conservatism of the poet's nature is further seen in his fears for the future of his country, in connection with the Reform Bill. It is a question which we need not now discuss—for time has solved and settled it—whether it would not have been better for the country if our reforms had been more gradual, and less sweeping in their character ; but as the attitude of mind which Wordsworth showed on those questions of local or imperial politics has an interest to all students of his works, it may be more useful to give some further illustration of it than to criticise it.

Writing to Lord Lonsdale (an undated letter) in 1827 about the Reform Bill, he said :—

"Perhaps the fate of the Bill is already decided, or will be so, before this reaches your hands. I cannot forbear, however, writing once more upon a subject which is scarcely ever out of my thoughts. I see that a writer in the *Quarterly Review*

is most decidedly against the Bill going into Committee : he appears convinced, as thousands are, that no good would arise from it, and that the destruction of the Constitution must follow ; adding that if the Lords resist they will at least fall with honour. In this I perfectly concur with him. . . . Residing at a distance from town, I can form no distinct notion of the mischief which might immediately arise, with an executive such as now afflicts this kingdom. But I do confidently affirm that there are materials for constructing a party which, if the Bill be not passed, might save the country. I have numerous acquaintances among men who have all their lives been more or less of Reformers, but not one, unfastened by party engagements, who does not strongly condemn this Bill."

Again, on 29th November, he wrote to the same correspondent :—

" . . . The nation will now know what Lord Grey meant by his expression, 'a measure equally efficient.' If he meant efficient for a change, as great, as sudden, and upon the same principles of spoliation and disfranchisement in the outset as the former Bill, and the new constituency to be supplied by its coarse and clumsy contrivances, not to speak of the party injustice of their application—then it must be obvious to all honest men of sound judgment that nothing can prevent a subversion of the existing Government by King, Lords, and Commons, and the violation of the present order of society in this country. Such at least is the deliberate opinion of all those friends whose judgment I am accustomed to look up to. One of the ablest things I have read upon the character and tendency of the Reform Bill is in the *North American Review* of four or five months back. The author lays it down—and I think gives irrefragable reasons for his opinion—that the numerical principle adopted, and that of property also, can find no root but in universal suffrage. Being a Republican, and a

professed hater and despiser of our modified feudal institutions, he rejoices over the prospect, and his views, though in some points mistaken, for want of sufficient knowledge of English society, are entitled to universal consideration."

Again, in a subsequent letter :—

" . . . The altered Bill does little or nothing to prevent the dangers of the former. . . . The mischief already done can never be repaired. The scheme of regulating representation by arbitrary lines of property or numbers is impracticable ; such distinctions will melt away before the inflamed passions of the people. No Government will prove sufficiently strong to maintain them, till the novelty which excites a thirst for further change shall be worn off, and the new constituency have a chance of acquiring by experience the habits of a temperate use of their powers. A preponderance so large being given to ten-pound renters, the interest and property of the large towns where they are to vote will not be represented, much less than of the community at large ; for these ten-pound renters are mainly men without substance, and live, as has been said, from hand to mouth. Then will follow frequent Parliaments—triennial perhaps at first—which will convert the representatives into mere slavish delegates, as they now are in America, under the dictation of ignorant and selfish numbers, misled by unprincipled journalists, who, as in France, will, no few of them, find their way into the House of Commons, and so the last traces of a deliberative assembly will vanish. But enough of this melancholy topic. I resided fifteen months in France, during the heat of the Revolution, and have some personal experience of the course which these movements must take, if not fearlessly resisted, before the transfer of legislative power takes place. . . ."

On December 18, 1826, Dorothy Wordsworth, writing to H. C. Robinson from Rydal Mount, said, of the Lambs : " I wish

they would now and then let us see their handwriting ; a single page from Charles Lamb is worth ten postages ;" and of her brother William : " My brother has lately written some very good sonnets. I wish that I could add that the ' Recluse ' was brought from his hiding-place."

On the 29th of January 1827, writing to the same friend, Wordsworth said : " My poems have, for this month past, been printing with the Longmans. I have revised the poems carefully, particularly *The Excursion*, and I trust with considerable improvement ; but you will judge."

In an earlier letter to Robinson, April 6, 1826, Wordsworth referred to some suggestions of his for a change in the arrangement of the poems ; and, speaking of what he was doing, with a view to the new edition, added : " There is no material change in the classification, except that the Scotch poems have been placed all together, under the title of *Memorials of Tours in Scotland* ; this has made a gap in the poems of Imagination which has been supplied by *Laodamia*, *Ruth*, and one or two more, from the class of Affections, etc."

In the same year, writing to Kenyon, Wordsworth says : " I, together with Dora, spent a week very pleasantly with the Southesys since the commencement of the present month, and we also had a picnic meeting under Raven Crag by the margin of Wytheburn—the families of Greta Hall and Rydal Mount, with other vagrants, making a party of about thirty. A merry group we formed, round a gypsy fire upon the rocky point that juts from the shore, on the opposite side of the lake from the high-road."

The years 1825 to 1830 were not productive ones in Wordsworth's poetic life. The *Skylark* of 1825, the *Ode to May* of 1826, and *The Triad*, *The Wishing Gate*, and *The Power of Sound* of 1828, were the best things he wrote during these six years.

It should be recorded that Wordsworth's special friend, Sir George Beaumont, died in February 1827. Of this event Sir Walter Scott wrote thus in his diary :—

“ *February 14, 1827.*

“ Sir George Beaumont is dead ; by far the most sensible and pleasing man I ever knew—kind, too, in his nature, and generous—gentle in society, and of those mild manners which tend to soften the causticity of the general London tone of persiflage and personal satire. As an amateur painter, he was of the very highest distinction ; and though I knew nothing of the matter, yet I should hold him a perfect critic on painting, for he always made his criticisms intelligible, and used no slang. I am very sorry, as much as it is in my nature to be, for one whom I could see but seldom. He was the great friend of Wordsworth, and understood his poetry, which is a rare thing, for it is more easy to see his peculiarities than to feel his great merit, or follow his abstract ideas.” *

I think it likely that Wordsworth spent part of the autumn of 1827 at Brinsop Court. Writing from Liverpool in the beginning of the following year, he said :—

“ *Liverpool, Jan. 25, 1838.*

“ . . . When in Herefordshire I passed a few days with Sir Uvedale Price, one of the late batch of baronets. He is in his 81st year, and as active in ranging about his woods as a setter dog. We talked much of Sir George Beaumont, to whom he was very strongly attached. He has just written a most ingenious work on ancient metres, and the proper mode of reading Greek and Latin verse. If he is right, we have all been wrong ; and I think he is. It is a strange subject to interest a man at his age, but he is all life and spirits. . . .”

* See Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, vol. ix. p. 89.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

TOURS ON THE RHINE AND IN THE ISLE OF MAN—THE TEXT OF THE POEMS.

IN the year 1828 Wordsworth went with his daughter and Coleridge on a short tour up the Rhine for a fortnight, returning by Holland; and in the same year Dorothy Wordsworth visited the Isle of Man with her nephew. The Fenwick notes to the poems tell us something of the journey on the Rhine to Mr. Aders' at Godesberg, and at St. Goar—and Wordsworth himself memorialised it in two short poems—but the best record of this visit is to be found in a book called *Beaten Paths; and those who trod them*, by Thomas Colley Grattan. In the second volume of this book, Chapter IV., there is an account of a three days' tour with Coleridge and Wordsworth, from which the following is extracted:—

“On the 25th of June 1828, being then resident in Brussels, I received a note from my neighbour, Major Pryce Gordon, asking me to spend the evening at his house, to meet the two poets whose names stand above, and whom he had picked up as they were passing through on a tour to the Meuse and the Rhine. I was punctual to the hour fixed; but I found the poets before me in the drawing-room, and also a young lady, Mr. Wordsworth's daughter.

One involuntarily imagines a notion, though rarely a likeness, of persons of any note. I had seen an engraved portrait of Coleridge, but it was not a bit resembling the original. . . .

I had never seen any likeness of Wordsworth except in my mind's eye, and *it* was not happier regarding him than the limner or engraver had been with respect to his brother bard. . . .

Wordsworth was, if possible, more unlike what he must appear in the fancy of those who have read his poetry and have never seen the author. He was a perfect antithesis to Coleridge—tall, wiry, harsh in features, coarse in figure, inelegant in looks. He was roughly dressed in a long brown *surtout*, striped duck trousers, fustian gaiters, and thick shoes. He more resembled a mountain farmer than a 'lake poet.' His whole air was unrefined and unprepossessing.

This was incontestably the first impression made on others as well as on me. But, on after observation, and a little reflection, I could not help considering that much that seemed unfavourable in Wordsworth might be really placed to his advantage. There was a total absence of affectation, or egotism; not the least effort at display, or assumption of superiority over any of those who were quite prepared to concede it to him. He seemed satisfied to let his friend and fellow-traveller take the lead, with a want of pretension rarely found in men of literary reputation far inferior to his; while there was something unobtrusively amiable in his bearing towards his daughter.

There were several gentlemen of the party. Coleridge talked much, and indiscriminately, with those next him, or about him. He did not appear to talk for effect, but purely for talking's sake. He seemed to breathe in words. Wordsworth was at times fluent, but always commonplace; full of remark, but not of observation. He spoke of scenery as far as its aspect was concerned; but he did not enter into its associations with moral beauty. He certainly did not talk well. But in fact he had no encouragement. He had few listeners; and what seemed rather repulsive in him was perhaps chiefly from its

grating contrast to the wonderful attraction of Coleridge. His was a mild, enthusiastic flow of language; a broad, deep stream, carrying gently along all that it met with on its course—not a whirlpool that drags into its vortex and engulfs what it seizes on. Almost everything he talked about became the subject of a lecture of great eloquence and precision. . . .

It was soon arranged that I should join the tourists in the course of their sojourn on the banks of the Meuse, towards which quarter I had been for some days projecting a ramble. . . .

At both Waterloo and Quatre Bras, while Wordsworth keenly inspected the field of battle insatiably curious after tombstones, and spots where officers had fallen (the Duke of Brunswick, Picton, Ponsonby, etc.), Coleridge spoke to me of the total deficiency of memorable places to excite any interest in him unless they possessed some *natural* beauty. He called this a defect. I thought it was, and a strange one in such a man, as associations of moral interest seem so fruitfully to spring in a poetic mind on the sites of memorable deeds. Coleridge took evident delight in rural scenes. He was in ecstasies at a group of haymakers in a field as we passed. He said the little girls, standing with their rakes, the handles resting on the ground, 'looked like little saints.' Half a dozen dust-covered children going by the roadside, with a garland of roses raised above their heads, threw him into raptures. . . .

At Namur we walked out by the light of a splendid full moon. We poked our way through the narrow streets to the bridge of the Sambre, then to that of the Meuse—Wordsworth, who took charge of his daughter, pioneering us along, bustling through, asking the way from every one we met; while Coleridge walked after, leaning on my arm, and in a total abstraction of thought and feeling, indifferent as to whether we went right or left, but finding somewhat to admire in every glance of moonshine or effect of shade, and a rich fund to draw from in his own mind. He talked away on many subjects;

and at last the broad river, the lofty ridges of hills, and masses of wood, burst suddenly on us in the full light, as we emerged from a gloomy passage that opened on the quay.

Coleridge advanced towards the river, with quiet expressions of enjoyment at the beauty around him. Wordsworth stepped quickly on, and said aloud, yet more to himself than to us, 'Ay, there it is—there's the bridge! Let's see how many arches there are—one, two, three,' and so on, till he counted them all, with the accuracy and hardness of a stonecutter.

The shadow of the bridge falling on the water gave to every open arch its clear reflection in the stream, which made each of course perfectly round, looking like a row of so many huge, limpid moons, or, as I happened to observe, in allusion to their vapoury appearance, 'so many ghosts of moons.' This hit Coleridge's fancy.

'Very good!' said he, moving forward; 'that's a good observation; that's poetry. Let me see, let me see?' . . .

Wordsworth had pushed forward with his daughter close to the parapet of the bridge; but we all stopped simultaneously to listen to a delicious chorus of female voices which approached from the other side of the river. A *char-à-banc*, covered with brown linen awning, soon appeared, slowly crossing the bridge. It contained several well-dressed young women, *bourgeoises* of the town, returning no doubt from a country visit or picnic. They sang as long as they were in our hearing a German air, in parts, and very prettily. It harmonised exquisitely with the scene and the hour. . . .

We followed them in silence for some time, Wordsworth as usual in advance. When Coleridge lost the tones of the chorus he began again to chaunt *his* strain of poetry and philosophy; and, to my feeling, it was fitly accompanied by the dying cadences, which reached my ear for some time after they had failed to enter his. . . .

When we got again into the heart of the old town, it being

eleven o'clock, Wordsworth broke suddenly upon us with a downright matter-of-fact request, in his very matter-of-fact way, to join him in inquiries about a conveyance for Dinant the next morning. While Coleridge, the music still echoing in his soul, escorted Miss Wordsworth to the hotel (I praying for her safe arrival under such guidance), his brother poet and myself went very prosaically on our business. He was indefatigable in making inquiries from one *bureau* to another, as to time, distance, and, above all, as to price. At last he agreed to my original proposal to give up all thoughts of a public conveyance and to hire a calèche to ourselves. . . .

It was during those inquiries at the diligence offices . . . that I remarked Wordsworth's very imperfect knowledge of French, and it was then that he accounted for it by telling me that five-and-twenty years previously he understood and spoke it well, but that his abhorrence of the Revolutionary excesses made him resolve, if possible, to forget the language altogether, and that for a long time he had not read nor spoken a word of it. . . . Coleridge did not understand French at all. . . .

When we reached Dinant, Coleridge and Miss Wordsworth remained at the hotel, while Wordsworth and I, in a broiling sun, proceeded to ascend the steep rocks above the town for the sake of a view. We took off our coats, threw them across our arms, and trudged along. Wordsworth had quite the figure and air of a sturdy mountaineer in search of a stray sheep or goat. We had a scorching ramble of more than two hours, in which Wordsworth *expanded* amazingly, and gave me a much more favourable opinion of himself and his powers than I had heretofore conceived, but not all at once. There were no bursts of information, but a gradual development of it. He looked round, as we ascended, from time to time, at the prospect up and down and beyond the river; and he talked of painting, sketching, and many other subjects suggested by the scene. But he did not, after all, talk like a painter or a philo-

sopher, and not one bit like a poet. There was an inflexible matter-of-fact manner and spirit in all he said, which came out in a rather hoarse and harsh *burr* that made it disagreeable as well as unimpressive. I could hardly believe in the man's identity, or be convinced that I walked beside the author so remarkable for his imaginative and vapoury abstractions.

Near the summit of our path we came to a very picturesque shrine, with a cross and the sculptured figure of a Madonna inside. We sat down on the steps of this rural temple, and remained for some time enjoying the beautiful prospect of the Meuse, winding away through a landscape that united many charms. Wordsworth half promised that he would write something on the subject of that shrine, and the view from it. . . .

After walking for some time on the table-land, at top of these almost perpendicular rocks, without any subject being started of any particular interest—for such a situation rather invited the mind to dreamy commonplace—we at length got on a topic of a fixed and definable kind, one that my companion had evidently studied and felt, and on this he soon proved himself able to talk *ably*. It was Lord Byron and his poetry that thus excited him, and it was quite by chance that it was *kicked up*, as I might say, on our path.

He began, after a somewhat prolix explanation of his private feelings, and held forth for full half an hour in a strain of real sound sense and good criticism. He was, however, in my opinion, very undervaluing in his estimate of Byron as a poet, though very just in that of Byron as a man. But there was nothing on either point ungenerous or unfair. He clearly felt what he said, and all that he did say gave me a high idea of his probity and good feeling. It was exceedingly perspicuous, and might have been printed word for word. . . .

The chief heads were his notions of the great errors of Lord Byron as a writer; first, as regarded morals, as supposing that crime constituted heroism, violence power, etc. Secondly,

regarding knowledge of the human heart, in making personages of overwrought and overwhelming passion susceptible of tenderness, constancy, etc. Thirdly, in regard to style, of which he cited many examples. All this was widely open to reply, and much of it very unconvincing, though a great deal was just and striking. But he allowed Byron to have possessed great ability in the expression of strong and lively sentiment and command of language, and admitted that he must have been 'a very remarkable person' to have produced such an effect on the public as he unquestionably did. He summed up his judgment by saying that 'Lord Byron has been greatly overrated; will soon, and has already begun to sink in public opinion far below his real merit, and will then take his rank among the poets in his proper place'—which he intimated as not a very distinguished one. He 'very much doubted Lord Byron's having been a man of much originality of mind.' . . .

Of his own poetry I did not give him any temptation to speak over-much. He showed no anxiety to obtrude the subject on me; but he remarked that 'he did not like writing—he preferred short pieces, as sonnets, etc., to continuing his long work, *The Excursion*—he had no intention of more of it being published during his lifetime. . . .'

Another account of a meeting with Wordsworth and Coleridge, during this tour on the Rhine, occurs in the *Memoir of Charles Mayne Young* (tragedian), by Julian Charles Young. Part of it is worthy of reproduction. The biographer, J. C. Young, at that time a youth of twenty-two, was a fellow-guest with Wordsworth and Coleridge at the Aders's house. He writes:—

"*July 6, 1828.*—The reported presence of two such men as Coleridge and Wordsworth soon attracted to Mrs. Aders's house all the illuminati of Bonn—Niebuhr, Becker, Augustus

* *Beaten Paths*, vol. ii. chap. iv.

Schlegel, and many others. . . . Schlegel praised Scott's poetry. Coleridge decried it, stating that no poet ever lived, of equal eminence, whose writings furnished so few quotable passages. Schlegel then praised Byron. Coleridge immediately tried to depreciate him. 'Ah!' said he, 'Byron is a meteor, "which will but blaze, and rove, and die:" Wordsworth there' (pointing to him) 'is a "star luminous and fixed."' During the first *furor* of Byron's reputation the sale of his works was unparalleled, while that of Wordsworth's was insignificant, and now each succeeding year, in proportion as the circulation of Byron's works has fallen off, the issue of Wordsworth's poems has steadily increased.

I observed that, as a rule, Wordsworth allowed Coleridge to have all the talk to himself; but once or twice Coleridge would succeed in entangling Wordsworth in a discussion on some abstract metaphysical question. . . .

I must say I never saw any manifestation of small jealousy between Coleridge and Wordsworth; which . . . I thought uncommonly to the credit of both. I am sure they entertained a thorough respect for each other's intellectual endowments. . . .

Wordsworth was a single-minded man: with less imagination than Coleridge, but with a more harmonious judgment, and better balanced principles.

Coleridge, conscious of his transcendent powers, rioted in a licence of tongue which no man could tame. Wordsworth, though he could discourse most eloquent music, was never unwilling to sit still in Coleridge's presence, yet could be as happy in prattling with a child as in communing with a sage.

If Wordsworth condescended to converse with me, he spoke to me as if I were his equal in mind, and made me pleased and proud in consequence. If Coleridge held me by the button, for lack of fitter audience, he had a talent for making me feel *his* wisdom and my own stupidity; so that I was miserable and humiliated by the sense of it. . . .

I had occasional walks with Coleridge in the garden, and many with Wordsworth over the fields. The former was an indifferent pedestrian, the latter a practised one. I revert with great delight to a long expedition I one day made with Wordsworth alone. He had heard of the ruins of an old Cistercian abbey, Heisterbach, on the side of the Rhine opposite to that on which we were staying. He asked me, playfully, to join him, in these words:—

Go with us into the abbey——there ;
And let us there, at large, discourse our fortunes.

Hitherto I had only seen Wordsworth in the presence of Coleridge ; and had imagined him, constitutionally, contemplative and taciturn. To-day I discovered that his reticence was self-imposed, out of consideration for the inordinate loquacity of his brother poet. Coleridge always speechified or preached.

His argument
Was all too heavy to admit *much talk*.

Wordsworth chatted naturally and fluently, out of the fulness of his heart, and not from a wish to display his eloquence. As I listened to him in this happy walk, I could not but apply to him one of Hooker's wise saws, 'He who speaketh no more than edifieth is undeservedly reprehended for much speaking.'

Idolatry of Nature seemed with Wordsworth both a passion and a principle. She seemed a deity enshrined within his heart. Coleridge studied her rather as a mighty storehouse for poetical imagery than for innate love of her, for her own sweet sake. If once embarked in lecturing, no landscape, however grand, detained his notice for a second ; whereas, let Wordsworth have been ever so absorbed in argument, he would drop it without hesitation to feast his eyes on some combination of new scenery. . . .

In that same stroll to Heisterbach, he pointed out to me such beauty of design in objects I had used to trample

under foot, that I felt as if almost every spot on which I trod was holy ground which I had rudely desecrated. His eyes would fill with tears and his voice falter as he dwelt on the benevolent adaptation of means to ends discernible by reverential observation. . . .

It must not be assumed that the reciprocal admiration entertained by the two poets for each other's gifts made them blind to each other's infirmities. Wordsworth, in speaking of Coleridge, would admit, though most regretfully, the moral flaws in his character; such, for instance, as his addiction to opium, his ungrateful conduct to Southey, and his neglect of his parental and conjugal obligations. Coleridge, on the other hand, ever forward as he was in defending Wordsworth from literary assailants, had evident pleasure in exposing his parsimony. . . .”*

Of Dorothy Wordsworth's journey to the Isle of Man, the best record is, as usual, in her own Journal. She was accompanied by her nephew, William Wordsworth. The “Harry” referred to in her Journal was Mrs. Wordsworth's brother, the “retired Mariner” of the 9th Sonnet, composed during the subsequent tour of her brother in 1833. They left Rydal on the 26th of June 1828. The following are extracts from that Journal:—

“*Thursday, June 26th, 1828.*—Called at half-past two, and breakfasted by kitchen fire. Walked to the end of gravel terrace; grey calm, and warbling birds; sad at the thought of my voyage, cheered only by the end of it. Sat long at Morris's door; grey and still; coach full, and sour looks within, for I made a fifth; won my way by civility, and communicating information to a sort of gentleman fisher going to Wytheburn. English manners ungracious: he left us at Nag's Head with-

* See *Memoir of Charles Mayne Young* (1871), chap. v. pp. 117-122.

out a bow or good wish. Morning still foggy. Wytheburn, cliffs and trees. Stayed inside till an inn beside Bassenthwaite; but only another lady in coach, so had a good view of the many cloudy summits and swelling breastworks of Skiddaw, and was particularly struck with the amplitude of style and objects, flat Italian foreground, large fields, and luxuriant hedges,—a perfect garden of Eden, rich as ivory and pearls. Dull and barish near Cockermouth. Town surprised me with its poor aspect. Old market-house to be pulled down. Sorry I could not study the old place. Life has gone from my Father's Court. View from bridge beautiful. Ruin, castle, meadows with hay-cocks. . . . Again cold and dreary after river goes. Dorrington very dreary, yet fine trees. Dropped Mr. Lowther's sons from school. Busy-looking fresh-coloured aunt, looks managing and well satisfied with herself, but kind to the boys; little sister very glad, and brothers in a bustle of pleasure. . . . Workington very dismal; beautiful approach to Whitehaven; comfortless inn, but served by a German waiter; Buckhouse's daughter; a hall, a church; the sea, the castle; dirty women, ragged children; no shoes, no stockings; fine view of cliffs and stone quarry; pretty, smokeless, blue-roofed town; castle and inn a foreign aspect. Embarked at ten. Full moon; lighthouse; summer sky; moved away; and saw nothing till a distant view of Isle of Man. Hills cut off by clouds. Beautiful approach to Douglas harbour; wind fallen. Harry met me at inn; surprised with gay shops and store-houses; walk on the gardens of the hills; decayed houses, divided gardens; luxuriant flowers and shrubs, very like a French place; an Italian lady, the owner; air very clear, though hazy in Cumberland. Very fine walk after tea on the cliff; sea calm, and as if enclosed by haze; fishes sporting near the rocks; a few sea-birds to chatter and wail, but mostly silent rocks; two very grand masses in a little bay, a pelucid rivulet of sea-water between them; the hills mostly covered with cropped gorse, a very rich dark green. This

gorse cropped in winter, and preserved for cattle fodder. The moon rose large and dull, like an ill-cleaned brass plate, slowly surmounts the haze, and sends over the calm sea a faint bright pillar. In the opposite quarter Douglas harbour; illuminated boats in motion, dark masts and eloquent ropes; noises from the town ascend to the commanding airy steeps where we rested.

Saturday, 28th June.—Lovely morning; walked with Henry to the nunnery; cool groves of young trees and very fine old ones. General Goulding has built a handsome house near the site of the old nunnery, on which stands a modern house (to be pulled down). The old convent bell, hung outside, is used as a house-bell; the valley very pretty, with a mill stream, and might be beautiful, if properly drained. The view of the nunnery charming from some points.

Walked on to the old church, Kirk Bradden; handsome steeple. Burial-ground beautifully shaded, and full of tombstones. Tombstone or obelisk to the memory of a son of the Duke of Athol, commander of the Manx Fencibles.

Douglas market very busy. Women often with round hats, like the Welsh; and girls without shoes and stockings, though otherwise not ill dressed. Panniers made of matted straw; country people speak more Manx than English; the sound is not coarse nor harsh. Cliffs picturesque above Mona Castle; a waterfall (without water); the castle of very white stone from Scotland, after the style of Inveraray. How much handsomer and better suited to its site would be the native dark grey rock. The nunnery house is as it should be; and the castle, with stronger towers in the same style, would have been a noble object in the bay. . . . Road and flat sandy space to the sea; a beautiful sea residence for the solitary; pleasant breezes, and sky clear of haziness.

Sunday, 29th June.—A lovely bright morning; walk with H.;

a fine view over the sky-blue sea; breezy on the heights. At Mr. Browne's church. Text from Isaiah, the 'Shadow of a great Rock,' etc., applied to our Saviour and the Christian dispensation. Market-place and harbour cheerful, and, compared with yesterday, quiet. Gay pleasure-boats in harbour, from Liverpool and Scotland, with splendid flags. During service the noises of children and sometimes of carriages distressing. Mr. Browne a sensible and feeling, yet monotonous and weak-voiced, reader. His ironed shoes clank along the aisle—the effect of this very odd. Called in the Post Office lane at the postmaster's, narrow as an Italian street, and the house low, cool, old-fashioned and cleanly. Stairs worn down with much treading, and everything reminding one of life at Penrith forty years back. A cheerful family of useful-looking, well-informed daughters; English father and Scotch mother. Crowds inquiring for letters. To Kirk Bradden, one and a half miles; arrived at second lesson. Funeral service for two children; the coffins in the church. Mr. Howard a fine-looking man and agreeable preacher. The condition of the righteous and of the ungodly after death was the subject. Groups sitting on the tombstones reminded me of the Continent. The churchyard shady and cool, a sweet resting-place. We lingered long, and walked home through the nunnery grounds. The congregation rustic, but very gay. There seems to be no room for the very poor people in either church, and in Douglas great numbers were about in the streets during service. Mr. Putman called, a gentlemanly man, faded, and delicate-looking; brought up at Dublin College for the bar, took to the stage, married a hotel lady, disapproved by her friends, gave lectures on elocution, had profits, but obliged to desist, having broken a blood-vessel; now living on a very small income at Douglas in lodgings; sighing for house-keeping, and they have bought the house we visited last night on the sands. After tea walked with Joanna on pier—a very gay and crowded

scene. Saw the steam-packet depart for Liverpool. Ladies in immense hats, and as fine as millinery and their own various tastes can make them. Beauish tars; their pleasure-boats in harbour, with splendid flags; two or three worthy suitors in bright blue jackets, their badges on their breast, their hats trimmed with blue ribbands. For the first time I saw the Cumberland hills; but dimly. Sea very bright; talked with old sailor and tried his spectacles. Went to the Douglas Head, very fine walk on the turf tracks among the shorn gorse, bright green, studded with yellow flowers in bunches, the ladies-bed-straw; the green sea-weed with the brown bed of the river produces a beautiful effect of colouring, and the numbers of well-dressed, or rather *showily*-dressed, people is astonishing, gathered together in the harbour, and sprinkled over the heights. Fine view of rocks below us on the lower road; lingered till near ten. Lovely moonlight when I went to bed; amused with Miss Fanny Buston, her conceit, her long nose, her painted cheeks, *not* painted but by nature.

Tuesday, July 1st.—With Joanna to the shore, and alone on the pier. Very little air even there, but refreshing; and the water of the bay clear, and green as the Rhine; close and hot in the streets; but the sun gets out when the tide comes in; a breeze, and all is refreshed.

Wednesday morning, July 2d.—In evening walked to Port-a-Shee (the harbour of peace); foggy, and hills invisible, but stream very pretty. Shaggy banks; varied trees; splendid rosebushes and honeysuckles. Returned by sands; a beautiful playfield for children. The rocks of gorgeous colours—orange, brown, vivid green, in form resembling models of the Alps. The foggy air not oppressive.

Thursday, July 3d.—A fine morning, but still misty on hills.

On Douglas heights, the sea-rocks tremendous; wind high; a waterfowl sporting on the roughest part of the sea; flocks of jackdaws, very small; a few gulls; two men reclined at the top of a precipice with their dogs; small boats tossing in the eddy, and a pleasure-boat out with ladies; misery it would have been for me; guns fired from the ship, a fine echo in the harbour; saw the flash long before the report. Sir Wm Hilary saved a boy's life to-day in the harbour. He raised a regiment for Government, and chose his own reward—a Baronetcy!

Friday, 4th July.—Walked with Henry to the Harbour of Peace, and up the valley; very pretty overarched bridge; neat houses, and hanging gardens, and blooming fences—the same that are so ugly seen from a distance: the wind sweeping those fences, they glance and intermingle colours as bright as gems.

Saturday.—Very bright morning. Went to the Duke's gardens, which are beautiful. I thought of Italian villas, and Italian bays, looking down on a long green lawn adorned with flower-beds, such as ours, at one end; a perfect level, with grand walks at the ends, woods rising from it up the steeps; and the dashing sea, boats, and ships, and ladies struggling with the wind; veils and gay shawls and waving flounces. The gardens beautifully managed,—wild, yet neat enough for plentiful produce; shrubbery, forest trees, vegetables, flowers, and hot-houses, all connected, yet divided by the form of the ground. Nature and art hand in hand, tall shrubs, and Spanish chestnut in great luxuriance. Lord Fitzallan's children keeping their mother's birthday in the strawberry beds. Loveliest of evenings. Isle perfectly clear, but no Cumberland; the sea alive with all colours, the eastern sky as bright as the west after sunset.

Monday, 7th July.—Departed for Castletown. Nothing very interesting except peeps of the sea. Well peopled and cultivated, yet generally naked. Earth hedges, yet thriving trees in white rows; descent of a little glen or large cliff very pleasing, with its small tribute to the ocean. One cottage, and a corn enclosure, wild-thyme, *sedum*, etc.; brilliant and dark-green gorse; the bay lovely on this sweet morning; narrow flowery lanes, wild sea-view, low peninsula of Long Ness, large round fort and ruined church; bay and port, cold, mean, comfortless; low walk at Castletown, drawbridge, river and castle, handsome strong fortress, soldiers pacing sentinel, officers and music, groups of women in white caps listening, very like a town in French Flanders, etc. etc. Civility, large rooms, no neatness.

Tuesday, 8th July.—Rose before six. Pleasant walk to Port Mary Kirk, along the bay before breakfast; well cultivated, very populous, but wanting trees; outlines of hills pleasing. Port Mary, harbour for Manx fleet; pretty green banks near the port, neat huts under those rocks, with flower-garden, fishing-nets, and sheep, really beautiful; a wild walk and beautiful descent to Port Erin; a fleet of near forty sails and nets in the circular rocky harbour, white houses at different heights on the bank. Then across the country past Castle Rushen—a white church, and standing low; cheerful country, a few good houses, but seldom pretty in architecture; children coming from school, schools very frequent: now we drag up the hill, an equal ascent; turf, and not bad road, but a weary way.

But I ought to have before described our passage from Port Mary to Port Erin, over Spanish Head, to view the Calf, a high island, forty acres, partly cultivated, and peopled with rabbits—rent paid therewith; a stormy passage to the Calf, a boat hurrying through with tide, another small isle adjoining,

very wild; I thought of the passage between Loch Awe and Loch Etive. To return to the mountain ascent from Castle Rushen: peat stacks all over, and a few warm snow huts; thatches secured by straw ropes, and the walls (in which was generally buried one window) cushioned all over with thyme in full blow, low *sedum*, and various other flowers. Called on Henry's friend beside the mountain gate; her house blinding with smoke. I sate in the doorway. She was affectionately glad to see Henry, shook hands and blessed us at parting—'God be with you, and prosper you on your journey!' Descend: more cottages, like wagon roofs of straw, chance directed pipes of chimneys and flowery walls, not a shoe or a stocking to be seen. Dolby Glen, beautiful stream, and stone cottages, and gardens hedged with flowery elder, and mallows as beautiful as geraniums in a greenhouse.

Wednesday, 9th, Peele.—Morning bright, and all the town busy. Yesterday the first of the herring fishing, and black baskets laden with silvery herrings were hauled through the town, herrings in the hand on sticks, and huge black fish dragged through the dust. Sick at the sight, ferried across the harbour to the Island Castle, very grand and very wild, with cathedral, tower, and extensive ruins, and tombstones of recent date: several of shipwrecked men. Our guide showed us the place where, as Sir Walter Scott tells us, Captain Edward Christian was confined, and another dungeon where the Duchess of Gloucester was shut up fifteen years, and there died, and used to appear in the shape of a black dog; and a soldier who used to laugh at the story vowed he would speak to it, and died raving mad. The Castle was built before artillery was used, and the walls are so thin that it is surprising that it has stood so long. The grassy floor of the hill delightful to rest on through a summer's day, to view the ships and sea, and hear the dashing waves, here seldom

gentle,* for the entrance to this narrow harbour is very rocky. Fine caves towards the north, but it being high water, we could not go to them. Our way to Kirk Michael, a delightful terrace; sea to our left, cultivated hills to the right, and views backwards to Peele charming. The town stands under a very steep green hill, with a watch-tower at the top, and the castle on its own rock in the sea—a sea as clear as any mountain stream. Fishing-vessels still sallying forth. Visited the good Bishop Wilson's grave, and rambled under the shade of his trees at Bishop's Court, a mile further. The whole country pleasant to Ramsey; steep red banks of river. The town close to the sea, within a large bay, formed to the north by a bare red steep, to the south by green mountain and glen and fine trees, with houses on the steep. Ships in harbour, a steam-vessel at a distance, and sea and hills bright in the evening-time. Pleasant houses overlooking the sea, but the cottage † all unsuspected till we reach a little spring, where it lurks at the foot of a glen, under green steeps. A low thatched white house dividing the grassy pleasure plot, adorned with flowers, and above it on one side a hanging garden—flowers, fruit, vegetables intermingled, and above all the orchard and forest trees; peeps of the sea and up the glen, and a full view of the green steep; a little stream murmuring below. We sauntered in the garden, and I paced from path to path, picked ripe fruit, ran down to the sands, there paced, watched the ships and steam-boats—in short, was charmed with the beauty and novelty of the scene: the quiet rural glen, the cheerful shore, the solemn sea. To bed before day was gone.

Thursday.—Rose early. Could not resist the sunny grass

* Compare the *Elegiac Stanzas suggested by a picture of Peele Castle in a Storm*, vol. iii. p. 45.

† The house in which they were to stay at Ramsey.

plot, the shady woody steeps, the bright flowers, the gentle breezes, the soft flowing sea. Walked to Manghold Head, and Manghold Kirk: the first where the cross was planted. The views of Ramsey Bay delightful from the Head: a fine green steep, on the edge of which stands the pretty chapel, with one bell outside, an ancient pedestal curiously carved, Christ on the cross, the mother and infant Jesus, the Manx arms, and other devices; near it the square foundation surrounded with steps of another cross, on which is now placed a small sundial, the whole lately barbarously whitewashed, with church and roof—a glaring contrast to the grey thatched cottages, and green trees, which partly embower the church. Numerous are the grave-stones surrounding that neat and humble building: a sanctuary taken from the waste, where fern and heath grow round, and *over-grow* the graves. I sate on the hill, while Henry sought the Holy Well, visited once a year by the Manx men and women, where they leave their offering—a pin, or any other trifle. Walked leisurely back to Ramsey; fine views of the bay, the orange-coloured buoy, the lovely town, the green steeps. The town very pretty seen from the quay as at the mountain's foot; rich wood climbing up the mountain glen, and spread along the hillsides.”

Reference has been made in the course of this volume to Mr. Barron Field's MS., which he called “Memoirs of the Life and Poetry of William Wordsworth, with Extracts from his Letters to the Author.” It is a very miscellaneous and unequal product. Wordsworth himself went over it, and annotated it with much care, while he was opposed to its publication. But much that it contains is valuable; and the following letter from Wordsworth to Field, on the changes in the text of the poems introduced into the edition of 1836, to which Field had raised objection, is especially interesting:—

“ *Rydal Mount*, 24th October 1828.

MY DEAR SIR,—I will not spend time in thanking you for your kindness, but will go at once to the point; and to the strongest case, *The Beggars*. I will state the faults, real or supposed, which put me on the task of altering it.

What other dress she had I could not know,
you must allow, is a villainous line, one of the very worst in my whole writings—I hope so, at least.

‘ In all my walks,’ I thought obtrusively personal.

Her face was of Egyptian brown.

The style, or rather composition, of this whole stanza is what I call bricklaying, formal accumulation of particulars.

Pouring out sorrows like a sea,

I did not like; and *sea* clashes with ‘ was beautiful to see ’ below. ‘ On English land ’ is the same rhyme as ‘ gayest of the land ’ in the stanza below. Such were the reasons for altering. Now for the success.

Nor claim’d she service from the hood,

is (I own) an expression too pompous for the occasion, and if you could substitute a line for the villainous ‘ What other dress,’ etc., I would willingly part with it. But there is still a difficulty.

She had a tall man’s height or more
would anticipate

She tower’d fit person for a queen.

The boys could well understand ‘ *looking* reproof.’ There is frowning, shaking the head, etc. ‘ Telling me a lie ’ might be restored, without much objection on my part; for ‘ Heaven hears that rash reply ’ is somewhat too refined; but as

It was your mother, as I say,

is retained, the fact is implied of my knowledge of their having told an untruth. It is not to be denied that I have aimed at giving more eloquence and dignity to this poem, partly on its own account, and partly that it might harmonise better with the one appended to it. I thought I had succeeded in my attempt better than, it seems, I have done. You will observe that in any meditated alteration of the first stanza, which I should be very thankful if you would do for me, the word *head* cannot be used, on account of 'head those ancient Amazonian files' in the stanza below.

The Blind Highland Boy.

The shell was substituted for the washing-tub, on the suggestion of Coleridge; and greatly as I respect your opinion and Lamb's, I cannot now bring myself to undo my work, though if I had been aware beforehand that such judges would have objected, I should not have troubled myself with making the alteration. I met the other day with a pretty picture of hazardous navigation like this. I think it is on the coast of Madras, where people are described as trusting themselves to the rough waves on small rafts, in such a way that the flat raft being hidden from view by the billows, the navigator appears to be sitting on the bare waters.

Rural Architecture.

'From the meadows of Armath,' etc. My sister objected so strongly to this alteration at the time, that, her judgment being confirmed by yours, the old reading may be restored.

Pedestrian Tour among the Alps.

No more along thy vales and viney groves,
Whole hamlets disappearing as he moves,
With cheeks o'erspread by smiles of baneful glow,
On his pale horse shall fell Consumption go.

I had utterly forgotten this passage: at all events, as a bold juvenile thing it might be restored. I suppose I must have written it, from its being applied here, in my mind, not to an individual but to a people.

Ruth.

And there exulting in her wrongs,
Among the music of her songs,
She fearfully caroused.

This was altered, Lamb having observed that it was not English. I liked it better myself; but certainly to 'carouse cups'—that is, to empty them—is the genuine English.

The Sailor's Mother.

And thus continuing she said,
I had a son, who *many a day*
Sailed on the seas.

These last words shall be restored. I suppose I had objected to the first line, which, it must be allowed, is rather flat.

He to a fellow-lodger's care
Had left it to be watched and fed
Till he came back again.

Than this last line, I own,

And pipe its song in safety

strikes me as better, because 'from the bodings of his mind' he feared he should not come back again. He might dramatically have said to his fellow-lodger: 'Take care of this bird till I come back again,' not liking to own to another, or to himself even, in words, that he feared he should not return, but as he is not introduced here speaking, it is (I think) better, and brings in a pretty image of the bird singing, when its master might be in peril, or no more.

The Emigrant Mother.

Smiles hast thou, bright ones of thy own ;
 I cannot keep thee in my arms ;
 For they confound me. As it is,
 I have forgot those smiles of his.

Coleridge objected to the last two lines, for which is substituted—

By those bewildering glances crost,
 In which the light of his is lost.

The alteration ought, in my judgment, to be retained.

The Idiot Boy.

‘ Across the saddle ’ is much better. So ‘ up towards ’ instead of ‘ up upon ’ in *Michael*.

The Green Linnet.

A brother of the leaves he seems
 may be thus retained :—

My sight he dazzles—nay deceives :
 He seems a brother of the leaves.

The stanza, as you have been accustomed to quote it, is very faulty. ‘ Forth he teems ’ is a provincialism ; Dr. Johnson says ‘ a low word, when used in this sense.’ But my main motive for altering this stanza was the wholly unjustifiable use of the word *train*, as applied to leaves *attached* to a tree. A train of *withered* leaves, driven in the wind along the gravel, as I have often seen them, sparkling in April sunshine, might be said. ‘ *Did* feign ’ is also an awkward expletive for an elegant poem, as this is generally allowed to be.

To the Small Celandine.

‘ Old Magellan ’ shall be restored.

To the Daisy.

Thou wander’st the wide world about, etc.

I was loath to part with this stanza. It may either be restored, or printed at the end of a volume, among notes and variations, when you edit the fifteenth edition.

To a Skylark.

1 After having succeeded so well in the second ‘ Skylark ’ and in the conclusion of the poem entitled ‘ A Morning Exercise,’ in my notice of this bird, I became indifferent to this poem, which Coleridge used severely to condemn, and to treat contemptuously. I like, however, the beginning of it so well, that for the sake of that I tacked to it the respectably-tame conclusion. I have no objection, as you have been pleased with it, to restore the whole piece. Could you improve it a little ?

To the Cuckoo.

At once far off and near.

Restore this. The alteration was made in consequence of my noticing one day that the voice of a cuckoo, which I had heard from a tree at a great distance, did not seem any louder when I approached the tree.

Gipsies.

The concluding apology shall be cancelled. ‘ Goings on ’ is precisely the word wanted ; but it makes a weak and apparently prosaic line, so near the end of a poem. I fear it cannot be altered, as the rhyme must be retained, on account of the concluding verse.

In the second *Cuckoo* * I was displeased with the existing alteration, and in my copy have written in pencil thus:—

Such rebounds our inward ear
Often catches from afar ;
Listen, ponder, etc.,

restoring 'Listen, ponder,' as you wish. The word 'rebounds' I wish much to introduce here; for the imaginative warning turns upon the echo, which ought to be revived as near the conclusion as possible.

Peele Castle in a Storm.

The light that never was on sea or land

shall be restored. I need not trouble you with the reasons that put me upon the alteration.

The passages in *Peter Bell* were altered out of deference to the opinions of others. You say *little* is a word of endearment. I meant *little mulish* as contemptuous. *Spiteful*, I fear, would scarcely be understood without your anecdote.

Is it a party in a parlour,
Cramm'd just as they on earth were cramm'd ?
Some sipping punch, some sipping tea,
But as you by their faces see,
All silent, and all damn'd.

This stanza I omitted—though one of the most imaginative in the whole piece—not to offend the pious.

The Excursion, edition of 1827.

And make the vessel of the big round year. (P. 364.)

I know there is such a line as this somewhere, but for the life of me I cannot tell where.

* The poem he called *The Echo*. See vol. iv. p. 18.

He yielded, though reluctant, for his mind
 Instinctively disposed him to retire
 To his own covert ; as a billow heaved
 Upon the beach rolls back into the sea. (P. 192.)

I cannot accede to your objection to the billow. The point simply is, he was cast out of his element, and falls back into it, as naturally and necessarily as a billow into the sea. There is imagination in fastening solely upon that characteristic point of resemblance—stopping there, thinking of nothing else.

And there,
 Merrily seated in a ring, partook
 The beverage drawn from China's fragrant herb. (P. 380.)

'Drank tea' is too familiar. My line is (I own) somewhat too pompous, as you say.

I am much pleased that you think the alterations of *The Excursion* improvements. My sister thinks them so invariably. Read page 332 thus :—

Though apprehensions cross'd me that my zeal
 To his might well be likened, *etc.*,

shorter. Page 220, for 'When night,' *etc.*, read 'Till night,' *etc.*—I remain, very faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH."

CHAPTER XXXV.

VISIT TO IRELAND—CORRESPONDENCE WITH ROWAN HAMILTON,
1828-1830.

Two letters from Wordsworth to Mr. Field, in reference to his own poems, may begin this chapter :— *

“ *Rydal Mount, 20th Decr. 1828.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I am truly glad that you liked *The Triad*.† I think great part of it is as spirited as anything I have written ; but I was afraid to trust my judgment, as the airy figures are all sketched from originals that are dear to me.

I have had a Worcester paper sent me, that gives what it calls the real history of *Miserrimus*—spoiling, as real histories generally do, the poem altogether. I doubt whether I ought to tell it you, and yet I may ; for I had heard before—though since I wrote the sonnet—another history of the same tombstone. The first was that it was placed over an impious wretch, who, in Popish times, had profaned the pyx. The newspaper tale is that it was placed over the grave of a Non-juring clergyman at his own request—one who refused to take the oath to King William, was ejected in consequence, and lived upon the charity of the Jacobites. He died at eighty-eight years of age ; so that, at any rate, he could not have been ill-fed ; yet the story says that the word alluded to his own sufferings, on the account of his ejection only. He must

* They are from MS. *Memoirs* mentioned at p. 149.

† Just published in *The Keepsake* for 1829.

have been made of poor stuff; and an act of duty, of which the consequences were borne so ill, has little to recommend him to posterity. I can scarcely think that such a feeling would have produced so emphatic and startling an epitaph—and in such a place—just at the last of the steps falling from the Cathedral to the Cloister. The pyx story is not probable. The stone is too recent.

I should like to write a short Indian piece, if you would furnish me with a story. Southey mentioned to me one in Forbes's *Travels in India*. Have you access to the book, and leisure to consult it? He has it not. It is of a Hindoo girl, who applied to a Bramin to recover a faithless lover—an Englishman. The Bramin furnished her with an unguent, with which she was to anoint his chest, while sleeping, and the deserter would be won back. If you can find the passage and (as I said before) have leisure, pray be so kind as to transcribe it for me, and let me know whether you think anything can be made of it.

Adieu! and believe me affectionately and faithfully yours,
WM. WORDSWORTH."

Mr. Field sent the story from Forbes's *Oriental Memoirs* vol. iii. pp. 233-5, as quoted in *The Quarterly Review*, and Wordsworth replied:—

"Rydal Mount, 19th January 1829.

MY DEAR SIR,—Thank you for the extract from the *Quarterly*. It is a noble story. I remembered having read it; but it is less fit for a separate poem than to make part of a philosophical work. I will thank you for any notices from India, though I own I am afraid of an Oriental story. I know not that you will agree with me; but I have always thought that stories, where the scene is laid by our writers in distant climes, are mostly hurt, and often have their interest quite destroyed, by being overlaid with foreign imagery; as if the tale had been

chosen for the sake of the imagery only.—I remain, very faithfully yours,
W. WORDSWORTH."

"*Rydal Mount, Kendal, 19th January* [1829].

MY DEAR SIR,— . . . I was much pleased with a little drawing by Mr. Edmund Field—exceedingly so, and I wrote opposite it two stanzas which I hope he and Mrs. Field will pardon, as I have taken a liberty with his name. The drawing is admirably done, and just of such a scene as I delight in, and my favourite river the Duddon, Lowther, Derwent, etc., abound in. . . ."

At this time Wordsworth had much correspondence about the prospects of his son John, who had taken orders, and was anxious to obtain a living or curacy. He wrote to Lord Lonsdale and others about him. The son at last accepted the curacy of Whitwick, near Ashby, Leicestershire, under Mr. Mereweather. Meanwhile—in December 1828—Lord Lonsdale offered him the living of Moresby, in Cumberland. As his son was as yet only a deacon, Wordsworth asked and obtained the favour of his being allowed to remain at Whitwick for some time, and that a temporary curate might be appointed at Moresby. Obtaining priest's orders in the end of December, the son was able to accept the living of Moresby.

A letter written about this time to W. Rowan Hamilton, in reference to his own and a friend's verses, brings out Wordsworth's opinions on style, and on the structure of the Sonnet :—*

"*Rydal Mount, Kendal, Feb. 12, 1829.*

. . . Now for a few words upon your enclosures. Your own verses are dated 1826. I note this early date with pleasure, because I think if they had been composed lately, the only objections I make to them would probably not have

* See *Life of Sir W. Rowan Hamilton*, vol. i. pp. 327-8.

existed, at least in an equal degree. It is an objection that relates to style alone, and to versification ; for example, the last line, 'And he was *the* enthusiast no more,' which is, in meaning, the weightiest of all, is not sinewy enough in sound—the syllable *the*, the metre requires, should be long, but it is short, and imparts a languor to the sense. The three lines, 'As if he were addressing,' etc., are too prosaic in movement. . . .

The specimens of your young friend's* genius are very promising. . . . I should say to him, however, as I said to you, that *style* is, in poetry, of incalculable importance ; he seems, however, aware of it, for his diction is obviously studied. Thus the great difficulty is to determine what constitutes a good style. In deciding this, we are all subject to delusions ; not improbably I am so, when it appears to me that the metaphor in the first speech of his dramatic scene is too much drawn out ; it does not pass off as rapidly as metaphors ought to, I think, in dramatic writing. I am well aware that our early dramatists abound with these continuations of imagery, but to me they appear laboured and unnatural—at least, unsuited to that species of composition of which action and motion are the essentials. 'While with the ashes of a light that was,' and the two following lines are in the best style of dramatic writing ; to every opinion thus given, always add, I pray you, *in my judgment*, though I may not, to save trouble or to avoid a charge of false modesty, express it. 'This over-perfume of a heavy pleasure,' etc., is admirable, and indeed it would be tedious to praise all that pleases me.

Shelley's *Witch of Atlas* I never saw ; therefore the stanza referring to Narcissus and her was read by me to some disadvantage. One observation I am about to make will at least prove I am no flatterer, and will, therefore, give a qualified value to my praise :—

There was nought there
But those three antient hills *alone*.

* Francis B. Edgeworth.

Here the word *alone* being used instead of *only* makes an absurdity like that noticed in the *Spectator*—‘Enter a king and three fiddlers, *solus*.’

The Sonnet I like very much, with no drawback but what is, in a great measure, personal to myself. I am so accustomed, in my own practice, to pass *one* set of rhymes at least through the first eight lines, that the want of that vein of sound takes from the music something of its consistency—to my voice and ear. Farewell! I shall at all times be glad to hear from you, and still more to see you.”

A portion of an earlier letter to Hamilton will show the minute earnestness of Wordsworth’s criticism, his belief in the close relation of the logical to the imaginative faculty, and his opinion of the ancient as compared with modern writers.

“*Rydal Mount, near Kendal,**
September 24, 1827.

You will have no pain to suffer from my sincerity. . . . You will not, I am sure, be hurt, when I tell you that the workmanship is not what it ought to be,

Some *touch* of human sympathy find way,
And whisper that while Truth’s and Science’ *ray*
With such serene effulgence o’er thee shone.

Sympathy might whisper, but a *touch* of sympathy could not. ‘Truth’s and Science’ ray,’ for the ray of Truth and Science, is not only extremely harsh, but a ‘ray *shone*’ is, if not absolutely a pleonasm, a great awkwardness; a ‘ray fell or ‘shot’ may be said; and *a sun*, or *a moon*, or *a candle* shone, but not a ray. I much regret that I did not receive these verses while you were here; that I might have given you *vivâ voce* a comment upon them which would be tedious by letter, and,

* See *Life of Sir W. Rowan Hamilton*, i. pp. 266-8.

after all, very imperfect. If I have the pleasure of seeing you again, I will beg permission to dissect these verses, or any other you may be inclined to show me ; but I am certain that, without conference with me, or any benefit drawn from my practice in metrical composition, your own high powers of mind will lead you to the main conclusions ; you will be brought to acknowledge that the logical faculty has infinitely more to do with poetry than the young and the inexperienced, whether writer or critic, ever dreams of. Indeed, as the materials upon which that faculty is exercised in poetry are so subtle, so plastic, so complex, the application of it requires an adroitness which can proceed from nothing but practice ; a discernment, which emotion is so far from bestowing, that at first it is ever in the way of it. . . .

Your sister is, no doubt, aware that in her poem she has trodden the same ground as Gray, in his Ode upon a Distant Prospect of Eton College. What he has been contented to treat in the abstract she has represented in particulars, and with admirable spirit. Again, my dear Sir, let me exhort you (and do you exhort your sister) to deal little with modern writers, but fix your attention almost exclusively upon those who have stood the test of time. You especially have not leisure to allow of your being tempted to turn aside from the right course by deceitful lights."

In May 1829, Wordsworth wrote to Robinson :—"If I excursionise at all this summer it will be by steam to Staffa, Iona, etc. My eye, that has plagued me so long, is improving daily, but I wish I had seen Rome, Florence, and the Bay of Naples, as the recurrence of these attacks throws a shade over the future. I have not opened a book for nine weeks—a fine holiday !!!"

The Continental plan, however, was abandoned, and in the autumn Wordsworth went to Ireland with Mr. Marshall, the

member of Parliament for Leeds. On July 23d, he wrote to John Kenyon from Rydal:—

“Happy would I be if what I have thrown out should tempt you to make Ireland your object instead of Scotland. I have myself made three tours in Scotland, but cannot point out anything worthy of notice that is not generally known. Of particular sights and spots those which pleased me most were (to begin with the northernmost) the course of the river Beaully up to the sawmills, about twenty miles beyond Inverness—the Fall of Foyers upon Loch Ness (a truly noble thing if one is fortunate as to the quantity of water)—and Glencoe. These lie beyond the limit of your route—and within your route I was not much struck with anything but what everybody knows.”

On the following day he wrote to Rowan Hamilton at Dublin thus:—

“*Rydal Mount, July 24, 1829.*”

. . . I wish to make a tour in Ireland, perhaps, along with my daughter; but I am ignorant of so many points, as where to begin—whether it be safe at this *rioting* period—what is best worth seeing—what mode of travelling will furnish the greatest advantages at the least expense. Dublin, of course, the Wicklow Mountains, Killarney Lakes, and, I think, the ruins not far from Limerick, would be among my objects, and return by the North. . . .

It is time to thank you for the verses you so obligingly sent me. Your sisters' have abundance of spirit and feeling; all that they want is what appears in itself of little moment, and yet is incalculably great—that is, workmanship—the art by which the thoughts are made to melt into each other, and to fall into light and shadow, regulated by distinct preconception of the best general effect they are capable of producing. . . . Your own verses are to me very interesting, and affect me

much as evidences of high- and pure-mindedness, from which humble-mindedness is inseparable. . . .” *

Hamilton’s reply, and invitation, determined Wordsworth to start for Ireland. He went by Patterdale (where he met Sir Walter Scott) and Lowther to Whitehaven, there taking steamer to Ireland. From Patterdale he wrote † thus to Hamilton:—

“*Patterdale, August 4, 1829.*

I am truly obliged by your prompt reply to my letter, and your kind invitation, which certainly strengthens in no small degree my wish to put my plan of visiting Ireland into execution. At present I am at Patterdale, on my way to Lord Lonsdale’s, where I shall stay till towards the conclusion of the week, when I purpose to meet my wife and daughter on their way to my son’s at Whitehaven; and if I can muster courage to cross the Channel, and the weather be tolerable, I am not without hope of embarking Friday after next. This is Monday, August 4th; I believe every Friday the steamboat leaves Whitehaven for the Isle of Man; whether it proceeds directly to Dublin, I do not know, but probably it does. I do not think it very probable that my daughter will accompany me, yet she may do so; and I sincerely thank you, in her name and my own, for the offer of your hospitalities, which, as we are utter strangers in Dublin, will be highly prized by us; believe me, my dear Mr. Hamilton, most sincerely your much obliged,

W. WORDSWORTH.”

From Whitehaven, Wordsworth wrote ‡ to Hamilton:—

“*August 15, 1829.*

The steamboat has been driven ashore here, so that I could not have gone in her to Dublin. But my plans had been previously changed. My present intention is to start with

* *Life of Sir W. Rowan Hamilton*, vol. i. pp. 333-4.

† *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 337.

‡ *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 341.

Mr. Marshall, M.P. for Yorkshire, who gives me a seat in his carriage, for Holyhead, on the 24th inst. ; so that by the 27th or 28th we reckon upon being in Dublin, when I shall make my way to the Observatory, leaving him and his son to amuse themselves in the city, where he purposes to stop three days ; which time, if convenient, I should be happy to be your guest. We then proceed upon a tour of the island by Cork, Bantry, Killarney, Limerick, etc. etc., up to the Giant's Causeway, and return by Portpatrick."

The Rev. R. Perceval Graves writes* of his visit thus :—

"The event of the year to Hamilton was the visit of Wordsworth to Ireland at the end of August. This appears to have been due to a suggestion of Hamilton's. The suggestion, however, met a long-cherished desire of the poet, who had always felt and expressed a great interest in Ireland and her people. That this interest did not bear fruit in any poetical reminiscences of his visit is by himself attributed, 'with some degree of shame,' to the fact that he travelled in the carriage-and-four of his friend Mr. Marshall, instead of, as he would have preferred, on foot. He had intended to have had his daughter 'Dora' as his companion ; and had his intention been fulfilled, she might have proved to him now in Ireland what his sister 'Dorothy' was in 1803 in Scotland, the kindler and encourager of poetic feeling. As it is, his allusions to the eagles at Fair Head promontory, in his fine sonnet, *Dishonoured Rock and Ruin*, is the only record to be found among his poems of his having been in Ireland.

His first object, upon arrival, was the Observatory and its inmates ; thence he proceeded to Killarney, and afterwards availed himself of the invitation to Edgeworthstown, of which Francis Edgeworth had been the eager penman, writing in the

* *Life of Sir W. Rowan Hamilton*, vol. i. p. 310.

name of his mother and sister. At Edgeworthstown, Hamilton again met Wordsworth, spending a few days in his company before the poet's return to England by the northern coast.

The account which Miss Eliza Mary Hamilton (Sir William's sister) gives of Wordsworth at the Observatory, Dunsink, during this visit to Ireland, is full of interest and subtle characterisation.

August 1829.

'Here he comes,' * exclaimed Sydney, after we had been a long time home, and were sitting in the house waiting his arrival, or rather return, for he had arrived during our absence, and gone out with my brother. I looked, and saw walking up the avenue with William a tall man, with grey hair, a brown coat, and nankeen trousers, on whom Smoke, our black greyhound, was jumping up in a most friendly manner, not by any means his wont with every stranger.

In a few minutes Wordsworth was in the room with us. 'Allow me to introduce my sisters to you, Mr. Wordsworth,' said William, and so we met. Then he and my brother sat down to luncheon, being informed that we had had ours. I stationed myself in one of the windows so as to command a good view of him, my sisters seating themselves rather nearer to him. He was evidently what I would call a naturally very reserved man, and in every way as complete an opposite to my preconception of him as anything could be. It amused me internally, and I felt myself involuntarily parodying the first lines of his own poem, *Yarrow Visited* :—

And this is Wordsworth? *this* the man
Of whom my fancy cherished,
So faithfully a waking dream,
An image that hath perished !

* *Life of Sir W. Rowan Hamilton*, vol. i. pp. 311-15.

There was a slight touch of rusticity and constraint about his perfect gentlemanliness of manner which I liked—an absence of that *entire* ease of manner towards strangers, which always tends to do away with my sympathy with any mind, particularly a gifted one; but everything he said and did had an unaffected simplicity, and dignity, and peacefulness of thought that were very striking. He was not at all a loquacious man, nor one who seemed inclined to approach with any degree of intimacy even those of whom he knew a good deal, but at the same time one who met every advance on the part of others with a ready and attractive affability. Other men did not seem necessary to him, or to the happiness of his existence, so that his sympathy with the happiness and sorrow, the good and ill of the whole creation, as it discovers itself in his poetry, gave one the feeling of his natural character being very peculiar.

There was such an indescribable superiority, both intellectual and moral, stamped upon him in his very silence, that everything of his I had thought silly immediately took the beautiful colouring of a wondrous benevolence, that could descend through love to the least and most insignificant things among the works of God, or connected with the weal or woe of man. I think it would be quite impossible for any one who had once been in Wordsworth's company ever again to think anything he has written silly.

They had been walking in Abbotstown. Of these grounds Wordsworth remarked that they were beautiful, with an air of melancholy and wildness about them particularly striking, he thought, from their vicinity to a city; but this was the only thing he said in the least of a poetical cast during this interview; so slight was the trace in his conversation of his being Wordsworth the poet, which pleased me very much, as agreeing with my own feeling that a real poet will not be one to introduce the subject of poetry into general conversation, and will be more averse to have sentiment on his lips than others with

whom feelings do not lie so deep. It always seemed to me quite unnatural for a poet to be very poetical in his everyday language.

My brother and Mr. Wordsworth soon retired to their rooms, and we to ours, to dress for dinner. When we next entered the drawing-room we found Wordsworth already there, and reading something to William, who sat by him listening intently. When we entered, the poet hastily turned round, with a gesture of politeness, moving his face, and indeed his whole body, in the direction to which we passed; but after a commonplace word or two passing between us, as *we* quietly took our seats at the window, in a way and in a listening attitude that intimated that we did not wish to interrupt them, he continued.

It was his own *Excursion* he was reading, in consequence of a discussion having arisen between them, in which William had alluded to a passage in that poem which, as well as I could collect, did not quite please him by its slight reverence for science.

Wordsworth first finished the passage, in a very low, impressive tone, moving his finger under every line as he went along, and seeming as he read to be quite wrapt out of this world.

I felt a tear gathering in my eye as I looked at him, and at that moment, I cannot exactly define why, he seemed to me *sublime*; and I involuntarily thought of the epithet applied to a greater poet perhaps, but I do not think a finer or purer specimen of our species—‘a divine old man.’

He then defended himself, with a beautiful mixture of warmth and temperateness, from the accusation of any want of reverence for science, in the proper sense of the word—science, that raised the mind to the contemplation of God in His works, and which was pursued with that end as its primary and great object; but as for all other science—all science which put this

end out of view, all science which was a bare collection of facts for their own sake, or to be applied merely to the material uses of life, he thought it *degraded* instead of raising the species. All science which waged war with and wished to extinguish imagination in the mind of man, and to leave it nothing of any kind but the naked knowledge of facts, was, he thought, much worse than useless; and what is disseminated in the present day under the title of 'useful knowledge,' being disconnected, as he thought it, with God and everything but itself, was of a dangerous and debasing tendency. For his part, rather than have his mind engrossed with *this* kind of science, to the utter exclusion of imagination, and of every consideration but what refers to our bodily comforts, power, and greatness, he would much prefer being a superstitious old woman.

My brother said of some passage that, 'so far as it went,' he quite agreed with it, but 'he would add a good deal more.' 'I am sure you would,' said Wordsworth, with a good-humoured smile; 'and if you will allow me to explain my sentiments first, I shall be glad to hear yours afterwards.' He then entered very much at large on the scope of his design, repeating that he venerated science, when legitimately pursued for the purpose of elevating the mind to God. The only class of scientific persons against whom he had directed his battery were those whom he would compare to the pioneers of an army, who go before the hero, certainly preparing the way for him, and cutting down the obstructions that oppose his march, but who themselves have no feelings of lofty enthusiasm, or of any kind but the hope of reaping part of the plunder and sharing in the profits of success. 'What,' he said, 'would have been the use of my praising such men as Newton? They do not need my insignificant praise, and therefore I did not allude to such sons of science.'

My brother argued that although he quite admitted that,

were the faculty of imagination to be done away with in man—could that be—he would be left indeed, as Wordsworth said, a most inferior being; still he thought the intellectual faculties held equal rank at least with the imaginative. But I could not help smiling at his own exemplification of the indestructibility of imagination in any mind, but above all in those of a high order, when he told Wordsworth that *he* believed mathematics to be a connecting link between men and beings of a higher nature; the circle and triangle he believed to have a real existence in their minds and in the nature of things, and not to be a mere creation or arbitrary symbol proceeding from human invention.

Wordsworth smiled kindly, but said it reminded him of the Platonic doctrine of the internal existence in the marble of those beautiful forms from which the sculptor was supposed only to withdraw the veil. William also smiled good-humouredly.

Francis Edgeworth's poem upon that subject was alluded to."

"It is remarkable," says Mr. Graves, "that the immediate effect of his (Hamilton's) intercourse with Wordsworth, during the visit of the latter to Ireland, was to cause him more definitely than before to arrive at the conclusion that for him in the future his path must be the path of Science, and not that of Poetry; that he must renounce the hope of habitually cultivating both, and that, therefore, he must brace himself up to bid a painful farewell to Poetry. Probably his conversations with the veteran poet brought home to him the fact, which Wordsworth's letters had previously insisted on, that Poetry is an art as well as an inspiration; that it demands, if excellence is to be attained, laborious and continued study; and that Poetry and Science are alike Muses that refuse to be successfully wooed by the same suitor. He now saw that this was

not only the doctrine preached by Wordsworth, but the truth which he exemplified ; that, in his case, Poetry absorbed the whole man, and that with him all things were habitually contemplated in relation to it, and that, especially, form, imagery, emotion, thought, were to him materials and instruments about which, and their mutual interaction, he was to be perpetually concerned, as one whose calling was to deal with them in a creative fashioning way, requiring the exercise of all his energies. Wordsworth, it was now felt by Hamilton, could not put up with the amateur poet. The old bard used often to say that it was good for themselves that many men should write verses, but that only the few who recognised Poetry as deserving and requiring the consecration to it of a life could ever be Poets in the higher sense. He was unwilling, therefore, that his young friend, whose powers he admired, should belong to the inferior class ; not denying, perhaps, that had he been able to give an undivided attention to Poetry, he might have attained to the higher, but convinced that this was impossible for one whose professional obligations were such as Hamilton's." *

The following letter† sent by Wordsworth to Hamilton, on his return to Rydal Mount, is full of admirable criticism on the verses which Hamilton and his sister had written :—

“ *Rydal Mount, December 23d, 1829.*

. . . The poem you were so kind as to enclose gave me much pleasure, nor was it the less interesting for being composed upon a subject you had touched before. The style in this latter is more correct, and the versification more musical. Where there is so much sincerity of feeling in a matter so dignified as the renunciation of Poetry for Science, one feels that an apology is necessary for verbal criticism. I will there-

* *Life of Sir W. Rowan Hamilton*, vol. i. 314-15.

† *Ibid.* vol. i. 351-4.

fore content myself with observing that *joying* for joy or joyance is not to my taste—indeed, I object to such liberties upon principle. We should soon have no language at all if the unscrupulous coinage of the present day were allowed to pass, and become a precedent for the future. One of the first duties of a writer is to ask himself whether his thought, feeling, or image cannot be expressed by existing words or phrases, before he goes about creating new terms, even when they are justified by the analogies of the language. ‘The cataract’s steep flow’ is both harsh and inaccurate. ‘Thou hast seen me bend over the cataract’ would express one idea in simplicity, and all that was required: had it been necessary to be more particular, *steep flow* are not the words that ought to have been used. I remember Campbell says, in a composition that is overrun with faulty language, ‘And dark as winter was the *flow* of Iser rolling rapidly,’—that is, flowing rapidly; the expression ought to have been *stream* or *current*.

Pray, thank your excellent sister for the verses which she so kindly intrusted to me. I have read them all three times over with great care, and some of them oftener. They abound with genuine sensibility, and do her much honour; but, as I told you before, your sister must practise her mind in severer logic, for example, the first words of the first poem: ‘Thou *most companionless*.’ In strict logic, ‘being companionless’ is a positive condition not admitting of more or less, though in poetic feeling it is true that the sense of it is deeper as to one object than to another, and the *day* moon is an object eminently calculated for impressing certain minds with that feeling; therefore the expression is not faulty in itself absolutely, but faulty in its position—coming without preparation, and therefore causing a shock between the common-sense of the words and the impassioned imagination of the speaker. This may appear to you frigid criticism, but, depend upon it, no writings will live in which these rules are disregarded. In the next

line, 'Walking the blue but foreign fields of day,' the meaning here is walking blue fields which, though common to see in our observation by night, are not so by day, even to accurate observers. Here, too, the thought is just; but again there is an abruptness: the distinction is too nice or refined for the second line of a poem.

'Weariness of that *gold* sphere.' *Silver* is frequently used as an adjective by our poets: *gold*, as I should suppose, very rarely, unless it may be in dramatic poetry, where the same delicacies are not indispensable. Gold watch, gold bracelet, etc., etc., are shop language. 'Gold sphere' is harsh in sound, particularly at the close of a line. 'Faint, as if weary of my golden sphere,' would please me better. '*Greets thy rays.*' You do not greet the *ray* by *daylight*; you greet the *moon*; there is no *ray*. 'Daring *flight*' is wrong: the moon, under no mythology that I am acquainted with, is represented with wings; and though on a stormy night, when clouds are driving rapidly along, the word might be applied to her apparent motion, it is not so here; therefore 'flight' is here used for unusual or unexpected ascent—a sense, in my judgment, that cannot be admitted. The slow motion by which this ascent is gained is at variance with the word. The rest of this stanza is *very* pleasing, with the exception of one word—'thy nature's *breast*'—say 'profane thy nature': how much simpler and better. 'Breast' is a sacrifice to rhyme, and is harsh in expression. We have had the *brow* and the *eye* of the moon before, both allowable; but what have we reserved for human beings if their features and organs, etc., are to be *lavished* on objects without feeling and intelligence? You will, perhaps, think this observation comes with an ill grace from one who is aware that he has tempted many of his admirers into *abuses* of this kind; yet, I assure you, I have never given way to my own feelings in personifying natural objects, or investing them with sensation, without bringing all that I have said to a rigorous

after-test of good sense—as far as I was able to determine what good sense is. Your sister will judge, from my being so minute, that I have been much interested in her poetical efforts. This very poem highly delighted me; the sentiment meets with my entire approbation, and it is feelingly and poetically treated. Female authorship is to be shunned as bringing in its train more and heavier evils than have presented themselves to your sister's ingenuous mind. No true friend, I am sure, will endeavour to shake her resolution to remain in her own quiet and healthful obscurity. This is not said with a view to discourage her from writing, nor have the remarks made above any aim of the kind; they are rather intended to assist her in writing with more permanent satisfaction to herself. She will probably write less in proportion as she subjects her feelings to logical forms, but the range of her sensibilities, so far from being narrowed, will extend as she improves in the habit of looking at things through a steady light of words; and, to speak a little metaphysically, words are not a mere *vehicle*, but they are *powers* either to kill or to animate.

I shall be truly happy to receive at your leisure the prose MSS. which you promised me. I shall write to Mr. F. Edgeworth in a few days. I cannot conclude without reminding you of your promise to bring your sister to see us next summer; we will then talk over the poems at leisure."

In connection with Wordsworth's visit to Ireland in 1829, the following is an extract from a letter which he wrote in that year to Francis Beaufort Edgeworth.

"... As you were so much struck with the yew-tree at Mucross, do not fail, if ever you come near Askeaton, to visit the ruins of its abbey, where you will find a much finer cloister, with a tree standing exactly in the centre as at

Mucross. The tree is infinitely inferior to that of Mucross in gloomy grandeur, but the whole effect being of the same kind, the impression on my mind at Mucross was not so deep as it would have been if I had not seen Askeaton before.

The faults I found with Killarney were, the bog between the town and the lake, the long tame ridge which you complain of, the want of groves and timber trees, though there is a prodigality of wood, the heavy shape of the highest hill, Mangerton, and the unluckiness of Caranthual being so placed as only to combine with the lake from its tamest parts. Your objection to the rocky knolls in the upper lake, as savouring of conceits in nature, is a sensation of your own, which it would be absurd to reason against. I did not feel it when on the spot, nor can admit it now."

Some remarks made by Wordsworth in a letter written to an English prelate, in the spring of 1829, before he visited Ireland, give us his mature convictions as to the cause of Irish misery and unrest:—

"The condition of Ireland is indeed, and long has been, wretched. Lamentable is it to acknowledge, that the mass of her people are so grossly uninformed, and from that cause subject to such delusions and passions, that they would destroy each other were it not for restraints put upon them by a power out of themselves. This power it is that protracts their existence in a state for which otherwise the course of nature would provide a remedy, by reducing their numbers through mutual destruction, so that English civilisation may fairly be said to have been the shield of Irish barbarism. And now these swarms of degraded people, which could not have existed but through the neglect and misdirected power of the sister island, are, by a withdrawing of that power, to have their own way, and to be allowed to dictate to us. A

population vicious in character as unnatural in immediate origin (for it has been called into birth by short-sighted landlords set upon adding to the number of voters at their command, and by priests, who for lucre's sake favour the increase of marriage), is held forth as constituting a claim to political power, strong in proportion to its numbers; though, in a sane view, that claim is in an inverse ratio to them. Brute force, indeed, wherever lodged, as we are too feelingly taught at present, must be measured and met—measured with care in order to be met with fortitude.

The chief proximate causes of Irish misery and ignorance are Popery, of which I have said so much, and the tenure and management of landed property; and both these have a common origin, viz. the imperfect conquest of the country. The countries subjected by the ancient Romans, and those that in the middle ages were subdued by the northern tribes, afford striking instances of the several ways in which nations may be improved by foreign conquests. The Romans, by their superiority in arts and arms, and, in the earlier period of their history, in virtues also, may seem to have established a moral right to force their institutions upon other nations, whether under a process of decline, or emerging from barbarism: and this they effected, we all know, not by overrunning countries as eastern conquerors have done—and Buonaparte, in our own days—but by completing a regular subjugation, with military roads and garrisons, which became centres of civilisation for the surrounding district. Nor am I afraid to add, though the fact might be caught at, as bearing against the general scope of my argument, that both conquerors and conquered owed much to the participation of civil rights which the Romans liberally communicated. The other mode of conquest, that pursued by the northern nations, brought about its beneficial effects by the settlement of a hardy and vigorous people among the distracted and effeminate nations against

whom their incursions were made. The conquerors transplanted with them their independent and ferocious spirit, to reanimate exhausted communities; and in their turn received a salutary mitigation, till, in process of time, the conqueror and conquered, having a common interest, were lost in each other. To neither of these modes was unfortunate Ireland subject; and her insular territory, by physical obstacles, and still more by moral influences arising out of them, has aggravated the evil consequent upon independence lost as hers was. The writers of the time of Queen Elizabeth have pointed out how unwise it was to transplant among a barbarous people, not half subjugated, the institutions that time had matured among those who too readily considered themselves masters of that people. It would be presumptuous in me to advert in detail to the long-lived hatred that has perverted the moral sense in Ireland, obstructed religious knowledge, and denied to her a due share of English refinement and civility. It is enough to observe that the Reformation was ill supported in that country, and that her soil became, through frequent forfeitures, mainly possessed by men whose hearts were not in the land where their wealth lay. . . .

WM. WORDSWORTH."

This same autumn of 1829 was a sad one for Wordsworth's sister Dorothy. She had gone up to Whitwick, near Ashby, in the month of November, to keep house for her clerical nephew, John Wordsworth, who had accepted a curacy there. It was a small place—some eight miles from Loughborough, and five from Ashby—almost wholly dependent on a stocking factory, and with few attractions in the way either of scenery or society. But it was only three miles from Coleorton, where Lady Beaumont was still in the enjoyment of a serene old age. To see her was always a delight and a stimulus.

On the last day of November she wrote to her friend Crabb

Robinson, asking for a sketch of his Pyrenean Tour—(she was always assiduous in adding to her ms. "Collection of Tours")—and added: "Alas! for Rome—I never expect to set foot upon that sacred ground, nor do I ever visit it even in a day-dream. But once again I do hope to see Switzerland if we all live a few years longer, and perhaps the country of the Tyrolese. Indeed, when my brother talks of Rome, it always rather damps my hopes of even crossing the Channel again, so many circumstances must concur to make so large a scheme practicable, and years slip away. On the 25th of next month (Christmas Day), I, the youngest of the three elders of the house, shall have completed my 56th year. . . . I intend to stay at Whitwick six months without stirring from the spot, *i.e.* till May. My plans, after that time, are not fixed; but certainly before I turn northward I shall visit my brother C. at Cambridge, and perhaps a friend at Worcester, and if so, shall work on to Brinsop, where Miss Hutchinson now is, so that it is probable I shall not return to Rydal till July."

At Whitwick she seems to have kept up the plan of taking long country walks; and her brother traces to this cause the first serious illness of his sister's life, which was so serious that it looked as if it would be the last. Having been so remarkably strong for fifty-six years, it came with the greater shock to herself and to all her friends. She recovered slowly, and, with characteristic self-denial, concealed the gravity of her illness from the household at Rydal till she was almost well again.

Mrs. Wordsworth went to Whitwick to nurse her sister, and stayed for some time. During her absence from Rydal, Wordsworth wrote thus to Robinson: "Dora is my house-keeper, and did she not hold the pen it would run wild in her praises. Sara Coleridge, one of the loveliest and best of creatures, is with me, so that I am an enviable person, notwithstanding our domestic impoverishment. Mrs. Coleridge is

here also—and if pity and compassion for others' anxieties were a sweet sensation, I might be envied on that account also, for I have enough of it."

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the living of Moresby, near Whitehaven in Cumberland, had been offered to John Wordsworth; and it was well for his aunt that he accepted it, and transferred himself to the north. She could not have continued to live in the Midlands. Three weeks after they left Whitwick, their friend Lady Beaumont suddenly died.

Dorothy Wordsworth did not accompany her nephew to his new home. She abandoned all her Malvern and Herefordshire plans, and went to Halifax in July, on her way to Rydal. This was to break her journey, and at the same time pay a visit to an aged friend, Mrs. Rawson, with whom she had lived as a child, and who was now a widow, eighty-three years of age. Mrs. Rawson had taken charge of her, she said, "at the request of my dying mother"; and nothing but the claims of filial piety could have tempted her to linger at Halifax on her way north. There she had a renewal of her illness; but she reached Rydal in the first week of September.

At Rydal Dorothy Wordsworth settled down to the life of an almost confirmed, but still a cheerful invalid. Her letters were always—like the old age promised by her brother to the climber of Helvellyn—"serene and bright"; and, whenever the weather was tolerable, she either drove in the pony-carriage they now kept at the Mount, or went out on the terrace-walks. On the 9th of January 1830, she wrote* thus to Charles and Mary Lamb:—

"Rydal Mount, 9th Jan. 1830.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—My nephew John will set off to-morrow evening to Oxford, to take his Master of Arts degree, and

* This letter is in the collection of Mr. Locker-Lampson.

thence proceed to London, where his time will be so short, there is no chance of being able to go to see you ; but there is a possibility that your brother may happen to be in town at the same time. . . .

I do not ask *you*, Miss Lamb, to write, for I know you dislike the office ; but dear Charles L., you whom I have known almost five-and-thirty years, I trust I do not in vain entreat you to let me have the eagerly desired letter at your earliest opportunity, which letter will, we hope, bring us tidings respecting H. C. Robinson. We have not heard anything concerning him since his departure from England, though he promised absolutely to write on his arrival at Rome, and if his intentions were fulfilled, he must have been a resident there for many weeks. Do you see Talfourd ? Does he prosper in his profession ? What family has he ? etc., etc. But I will not particularise persons, but include all in one general inquiry. . . . Tell us of all whom you know, in whom you know us also to be interested, but above all, be very minute in what regards your own dear selves, for there are no persons in the world, exclusive of members of our own family, of whom we think and talk so frequently, or with such delightful remembrances. Your removal to London (though to my thought London is scarcely London without you) shall not prevent my seeing you both in your own cottage, if I live to go there again ; but at present I have no distant plans leading me thither.

Now that Mr. Monkhouse is gone, we females have no absolute home there, and should we go it will probably be on our own way to the Continent, or to the southern shores of England. Wishes I do now and then indulge of at least revisiting Switzerland, and again crossing the Alps, and even strolling on to Rome. But, there is a great change in my feelings respecting plans for the future. If we make any, I entertain them as an amusement perhaps for a short while, but never set my heart upon anything which is to be accom-

plished three months hence, and have no satisfaction whatever in *schemes*. When one has lived almost sixty years, one is satisfied with present enjoyment and thankful for it, without daring to count on what is to be done six months hence.

My brother and sister are both in excellent health. In *him* there is no failure except the tendency to inflammation in his eyes, which disables him from reading much, or at all by candle-light; and the use of the pen is irksome to him. However, he has a most competent and willing amanuensis in his daughter, who takes all labour from mother's and aged aunt's hands. His muscular powers are in no degree diminished. Indeed, I think he walks regularly more than ever, finding fresh air the best bracing to his weak eyes. He is still the crack skater on Rydal Lake, and, as to climbing of mountains, the hardest and the youngest are yet hardly a match for him. In composition I can perceive no failure, and his imagination seems as vigorous as in youth; yet he shrinks from his great work, and both during the last and present winter has been employed in writing small poems. Do not suppose, my dear friend, that I write this boastingly. Far from it. It is in thankfulness for present blessings, yet always with the sense of the possibility that all will have a sudden check; and, if not so, the certainty that in the course of man's life, but a few years of vigorous health and strength can be allotted to him. For this reason, my sister and I take every opportunity of pressing upon him the necessity of applying to his great work, and this he feels, resolves to do it, and again resolution fails. And now I almost fear habitually that it will be ever so.

I have told you she is well—and indeed I think her much stronger than a few years ago—and (now that I am for the whole of this winter set aside as a walker) she takes my place, and will return from an eight miles' walk with my brother unfatigued. Miss Hutchinson, and her sister Joanna, are both with us. Miss H. is perfectly well, and Joanna very

Burns
happy, though she may be always considered an invalid. Her home is in the Isle of Man, and, with the first mild breezes of spring, she intends returning thither, with her sailor brother Henry—they two (toddling down the hill) together. She is an example for us all. With the better half of her property, she purchased Columbian bonds, at above 70, gets no interest, will not sell, consequently the cheapness of the little isle tempted her thither on a visit, and she finds the air so suitable for her health, and everything else so much to her mind, that she will, in spite of our unwillingness to part with her, make it her home. As to her lost property, she never regrets it. She has so reduced her wants that she declares she is now richer than she ever was in her life, and so she is. . . . I believe you never saw Joanna, and it is a pity; for you would have loved her very much. She possesses all the good qualities of the Hutchinsons. My niece Dora is very active, and her father's helper at all times; and in domestic concerns she takes all the trouble from her mother and me. . . .”

In April 1830, she wrote to Crabb Robinson: “Since the trees began to bud, I have extended my walks a little further; and do indeed feel myself equal to much more than I venture to attempt. In compliance with the judgment and advice of those who, I suppose, are much better judges of what is safe than I am myself, I shall continue to use similar caution during the whole of next summer and the following winter, if I live so long; and after that time I hope I may be safely trusted to my own feelings as a guide in ascertaining the measure of my strength. In the meantime it is certainly my duty to submit to be guided by those who have already suffered so much anxiety on my account, and there is no hardship in it, for this different mode of life has no effect whatever upon my spirits, and certainly it has agreed with my health; for, as I told you, I am, and have been since January, perfectly well. It was a

sad illness I had at Whitwick, and again I was very ill at Halifax, whence I came to Rydal the first week of September, and since have not slept one night from home. My brother has enjoyed his accustomed good health, and, though he passed his sixtieth birthday on the 7th of this month, is really as active—in as good walking plight—as when we crossed the Alps in 1820. My sister too retains her strength and activity wonderfully, though with some drawbacks from rheumatism and a weak arm that was sprained above twenty years ago. Dora longs to go to Rome: the father would dearly like it; the mother would fall into any plans that could reasonably be formed for such a purpose; and, as for me, I think I should lack none of the zeal which would have accompanied me thither twenty years ago. But we say not much about it. We are past the scheming age (except Dora), and there seem to be so many obstacles, that I cannot think we shall ever accomplish a journey of such magnitude; and, indeed, whenever I venture upon a *wish* it carries me no further than dear Switzerland. But who knows what circumstances may do for us. . . . My brother has laid his poetry aside for two or three months. He has enough of new matter for a small volume, which we wish him to publish; but I think he will not, he so dislikes publishing. A new edition of his poems will soon be called for. He has lately been busied, day after day, out of doors, among workmen who are making us another new and most delightful terrace.

On June 15, 1830, Wordsworth wrote to Rowan Hamilton at Dublin:—*

“ . . . Summer is at hand, and I look forward with much pleasure to the time when you are to fulfil your promise of bringing your sister here. . . . Therefore do not fail to come,

* See *Life of Sir W. Rowan Hamilton*, vol i. pp. 377-8.

and I will show you a thousand beauties, and we will talk over a hundred interesting things. . . .

Is Mr. Edgeworth gone to Italy? About the same time that brought your papers, there were now lying in my desk a couple of pages of two several letters which I have begun to him, and in both of which I was interrupted, and so they never came to a conclusion. If you are in correspondence with him, pray, in mercy to me, tell him so; and if you come soon, I will write to him with a hope that you will add something to my letter, to make it acceptable. I know not whether you can sympathise with me when I say that it is a most painful effort of resolution to return to an unfinished letter, which may have been commenced with warmth and spirit. There seems a strange and disheartening gap between the two periods; and if the handwriting be bad, as mine always is, how ugly does the sheet look!"

Mr. Graves says :—*

"With his friend Wordsworth, his correspondence was carried on with animation and increase of mutual confidence and affection. Hamilton's letters contain characteristic passages on the subject which moved him so much, his own relations to poetry and science, and upon contemplation and action; and the letters of Wordsworth exhibit a pleasant freedom of style, approaching playfulness, which is not usual with him, and which may be taken as a proof of his special liking for his correspondent. . . ."

In the month of July, Hamilton and his sister made their promised visit to Rydal, of which Mr. Graves says:—†

"His summer visit to Wordsworth occupied about three weeks from the end of July. From Rydal, Hamilton was taken

* *Life of Sir W. Rowan Hamilton*, vol. i. pp. 367-8. † *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 368.

by Wordsworth to Lowther Castle, the surroundings of which he saw under the guidance of Lady Lonsdale and Lady Frederick Bentinck, with the latter of whom he subsequently corresponded. He was kindly received by Southey on his return journey northwards; and from Whitehaven, whence he embarked for Dublin on the 20th of August, he sent to Wordsworth some farewell verses, recording the feelings which his visit had excited."

On the 9th September 1830, Wordsworth wrote to Hamilton:—*

" . . . We live in a strange sort of way in this country at the present season. Professor Wilson invited thirty persons to dine with him the other day, though he had neither provisions nor cook. I have no doubt, however, that all passed off well; for contributions of eatables came from one neighbouring house, to my knowledge, and good spirits, good humour, and good conversation would make up for many deficiencies. In another house, a cottage about a couple of miles from the Professor's, were fifty guests—how lodged I leave you to guess—only we were told the overflow, after all possible cramming, was received in the offices, farm-houses, etc., adjoining. All this looks more like what one has been told of Irish hospitality than aught that the formal English are up to."

Again he wrote to Hamilton from Lowther Castle, September 26, 1830:—†

" . . . Did I tell you that Professor Wilson with his two sons and daughter have been, and probably still are, at Elleray? He heads the gaieties of the neighbourhood, and has presided as steward at two regattas. Do these employments come under your notions of action as opposed to contemplation? Why

* *Life of Sir W. Rowan Hamilton*, vol. i. pp. 393-4.

† *Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 396, 397.

should they not? Whatever the high moralists may say, the political economists will, I conclude, approve them as setting capital afloat, and giving an impulse to manufacture and handicrafts—not to speak of the improvement which may come thence to navigation and nautical science. . . .

There is another acquaintance of mine also recently gone—a person for whom I never had any love, but with whom I had for a short time a good deal of intimacy—I mean Hazlitt, whose death you may have seen announced in the papers. He was a man of extraordinary acuteness, but perverse as Lord Byron himself, whose *Life* by Galt I have been skimming since I came here.”

During 1830 Wordsworth did not leave Rydal for any length of time; but late in the year he undertook—“a great feat for me,” he calls it—to ride his daughter’s pony all the way from Westmoreland to Cambridge, that she might be able to use it, when subsequently visiting her uncle, the Master of Trinity. He went by Matlock, and turned aside to see Chatsworth, and on his way thence to Derby composed his sonnet on Chatsworth. He went from Derby to Coleorton, now to him a place of sad recollections. There, in the grounds around the hall, he began his *Elegiac Musings*, in memory of the late Sir George Beaumont; and on his way thence to Cambridge on horseback he finished them, during a terrible storm of wind and rain.

The following letter* to Rowan Hamilton gives minute details of this journey from Westmoreland to Cambridge:—

“*Trinity Lodge, Cambridge, November 26, 1830.*

I reached this place nine days ago. . . . On the 5th of November, I was a solitary equestrian entering the romantic little town of Ashford-in-the-Waters, on the edge of the

* *Life of Sir W. Rowan Hamilton*, vol. i. pp. 401-3.

wilds of Derbyshire, at the close of the day, when guns were beginning to be let off and squibs to be fired on every side, so that I thought it prudent to dismount and lead my horse through the place, and so on to Bakewell, two miles further. You must know how I happened to be riding through these wild regions. It was my wish that Dora should have the benefit of her pony while at Cambridge, and, very valiantly and economically, I determined, unused as I am to horsemanship, to ride the creature myself. I sent James with it to Lancaster; there mounted, stopped a day at Manchester, a week at Coleorton, and so reached the end of my journey safe and sound—not, however, without encountering two days of tempestuous rain. Thirty-seven miles did I ride in one day through the worst of these storms, and what was my resource? Guess again—writing verses—to the memory of my departed friend Sir George Beaumont, whose house I had left the day before. While buffeting the other storm I composed a sonnet on the splendid domain of Chatsworth, which I had seen in the morning, as contrasted with the secluded habitations of the narrow dells in the Peak; and, as I passed through the tame and manufacture-disfigured country of Lancashire, I was reminded, by the faded leaves, of Spring, and threw off a few stanzas of an ode to May. But too much of self and my own performances upon my steed, a descendant no doubt of Pegasus, though her owner and present rider knew nothing of it.

Now for a word about Professor Airy: I have seen him twice, but I did not communicate your message; it was at dinner and at an evening party, and I thought it best not to speak of it till I saw him, which I mean to do, upon a morning call. There is a great deal of intellectual activity within the walls of this College, and in the University at large; but conversation turns mainly upon the state of the country and the late change in the administration. The fires have extended to within eight miles of this place, from which I saw one of the worst, if not

absolutely the worst, indicated by a redness in the sky, a few nights ago. . . . There is an interesting person in this University for a day or two, whom I have not yet seen, Kenelm Digby, author of *The Broadstone of Honour*, a book of chivalry, which I think was put into your hands at Rydal Mount. We have also a respectable show of blossom in poetry—two brothers of the name of Tennyson, one in particular not a little promising. . . . My daughter has resumed her German labours, and is not easily drawn from what she takes to. . . . She owes a long letter to her brother in Germany, who, by the by, tells us that he will not cease to look out for the book of Kant you wished for.”

After leaving the Lodge at Trinity College, Cambridge, Wordsworth paid some other visits before returning to the north. He went to London, and saw Coleridge, of whom he sent some interesting particulars to Hamilton. From Buxted Rectory, near Uckfield, Sussex, he wrote to Hamilton :—*

“ 24th January 1831.

In the *Quarterly Review* lately was an article—a very foolish one, I think—upon the decay of science in England, and ascribing it to the want of patronage from the Government: a poor compliment this to science! Her hill, it seems, in the opinion of the writer, cannot be ascended unless the pilgrim be ‘stuck o’er with titles and hung round with strings,’ and have his pockets laden with cash; besides, a man of science must be a Minister of State or a Privy Councillor, or at least a public functionary of importance. Mr. Whewell, of Trinity College, Cambridge, has corrected the misstatements of the reviewer in an article printed in the *British Critic* of January last, and vindicated his scientific countrymen. . . .

You are interested about Mr. Coleridge; I saw him several

* See his *Life*, vol. i. pp. 424-5.

times lately, and had long conversations with him. It grieves me to say that his constitution seems much broken up. I have heard that he has been worse since I saw him. His mind has lost none of its vigour, but he is certainly in that state of bodily health that no one who knows him could feel justified in holding out the hope of even an introduction to him as an inducement for your visiting London. Much do I regret this, for you may pass your life without meeting a man of such commanding faculties. I hope that my criticisms have not deterred your sister from poetical composition. The world has indeed had enough of it lately, such as it is ; but that is no reason why a sensibility like hers should not give vent to itself in verse."

An extract from a letter of Wordsworth's, in criticism of Lady Winchelsea's poems, written about this time to his friend Alexander Dyce, the editor of *Shakespeare*, may follow this:—

"Lady Winchelsea was unfortunate in her models—Pindarics and Fables,—nor does it appear from her *Aristomenes* that she would have been more successful than her contemporaries if she had cultivated Tragedy. She had sensibility sufficient for the tender parts of dramatic writing, but in the stormy and tumultuous she would probably have failed altogether. She seems to have made it a moral and religious duty to control her feelings, lest they should mislead her.

Of Love as a passion she is afraid, no doubt from conscious inability to soften it down into friendship. I have often applied two lines of her drama (page 318) to her affections:—

Love's soft bands,
His gentle cords of hyacinths and roses,
Wove in the dewy spring when storms are silent.

By the by, in the next page are two impassioned lines, spoken to a person fainting:—

Thus let me hug and press thee into life,
And lend thee motion from my beating heart.

From the style and versification of this, so much her longest work, I conjecture that Lady W. had but a slender acquaintance with the drama of the earlier part of the preceding century. Yet her style in rhyme is often admirable, chaste, tender, and vigorous; and entirely free from sparkle, antithesis, and that over-culture which reminds one by its broad glare, its stiffness and heaviness, of the double daisies of the garden, compared with their modest and sensitive kindred of the fields. Perhaps I am mistaken, but I think there is a good deal of resemblance in her style and versification to that of Tickell, to whom Dr. Johnson justly assigns a high place among the minor poets, and of whom Goldsmith observes, that there is a strain of ballad-thinking through all his poetry, and it is very attractive.*

Wordsworth was frequently asked—as most poets are—to write verses on a given subject. Crabb Robinson asked him to write some lines addressed to a Ruin! He was often asked for inscriptions. He refers to one of these requests in the following letter to Joseph Cottle at Bristol:—

“ Rydal Mount, near Kendal, 27th January 1829.

MY DEAR SIR,— . . . Your letter contained a request that I would address to you some verses. I wished to meet this desire of yours, but, I know not how it is, I have ever striven in vain to write verses upon subjects either proposed or imposed. I hoped to prove more fortunate on this occasion, but I have been disappointed, and therefore I beg you to excuse me. . . .

I was once a whole twelvemonths occasionally employed in an endeavour to write an inscription upon a suggested subject—though it was to please one of my most valued friends. . . .”

* This letter is in the Dyce Collection, at the South Kensington Museum.

Writing to Rowan Hamilton from Rydal Mount, on June 13, 1831,* Wordsworth gave some particulars of his return from London.

“ . . . I saw little or nothing of Cambridge on my return, which was upon the eve of the election; but I found that the mathematicians of Trinity—Peacock, Airy, Whewell—were taking what I thought the wrong side; so was that able man, the geological professor, Sedgwick. But ‘what matter?’ was said to me by a lady; ‘these people know nothing but about stars and stones;’ which is true, I own, of some of them. . . .

I have scarcely written a hundred verses during the last twelve months; a sonnet, however, composed the day before yesterday,† shall be transcribed upon this sheet, by way of making *my* part of it better worth postage. It was written at the request of the painter, Haydon, and to benefit him, *i.e.*, as he thought. But it is no more than my sincere opinion of his excellent picture. . . .

A selection from my poems has just been edited by Dr. Hine, for the benefit chiefly of schools and young persons. . . . 1500 copies have been struck off. . . . ”

Dorothy Wordsworth added an interesting postscript to this letter :—

“ As you, my dear friends, Mr. and Miss Hamilton, may have discovered by the slight improvement in legibility of penmanship, other hands have been employed to finish this letter, which has been on the stocks half as long as a man-of-war. . . .

This very moment a letter arrives—very complimentary—from the Master of St. John’s College, Cambridge (the place of my brother William’s education), requesting him to sit for his portrait to some eminent artist, as he expresses it, ‘to be placed in the old House among their Worthies.’ He writes in

* *Life*, vol. i. pp. 428-9.

† The sonnet beginning—“Haydon! let worthier judges praise the skill.”

his own name, and that of several of the Fellows. Of course my brother consents; but the difficulty is to fix on an artist. There never yet has been a good portrait of my brother. The sketch by Haydon, as you may remember, is a fine drawing; but what a likeness! All that there is of likeness makes it to me the more disagreeable."

Haydon's picture of Napoleon Buonaparte, in the island of St. Helena, was exhibited in London in April 1831. Haydon asked Wordsworth to write a sonnet on it, which, on his return to Rydal, he did, and sent it to his artist-friend early in June, with the following letter:—*

"MY DEAR HAYDON,—I send you the sonnet, and let me have your 'Kingdom' for it. What I send you is not warm, but piping-hot from the brain, whence it came in the wood adjoining my garden not ten minutes ago, and was scarcely more than twice as long in coming. You know how much I admired your picture both for the execution and the conception. The latter is first-rate, and I could dwell upon it for a long time in prose, without disparagement to the former, which I admired also, having to it no objection but the regimentals. They are too spruce, and remind one of the parade, which the wearer seems to have just left.

One of the best caricatures I have lately seen is that of Brougham, a single figure upon one knee, stretching out his arms by the sea-shore towards the rising-sun (William the Fourth), which, as in duty bound, he is worshipping. Do not think your excellent picture degraded, if I remark that the force of the same principle, simplicity, is seen in the burlesque composition, as in your work,—with infinitely less effect, no doubt, from the inferiority of style and subject; yet still it is

* *Life of B. R. Haydon*, vol. ii. pp. 306-7.

pleasing to note the undercurrents of affinity in opposite styles of Art.

I think of Napoleon pretty much as you do, but with more dislike, probably because my thoughts have turned less upon the flesh-and-blood man than yours, and therefore have been more at liberty to dwell with unqualified scorn upon his various liberticide projects, and the miserable selfishness of his spirit. Few men of any time have been at the head of greater events, yet they seem to have had no power to create in him the least tendency towards magnanimity. How, then, with this impression, can I help despising him? So much for the idol of thousands. As to the Reformers, the folly of the ministerial leaders is only to be surpassed by the wickedness of those who will speedily supplant them. God of Mercy, have mercy upon poor England! To think of this glorious country lacqueying the heels of France in religion (that is *no* religion), in morals, government, and social order! It cannot come to good, at least for the present generation. They have begun it in shame, and it will lead them to misery. God bless you.—Yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

You are at liberty to print the sonnet with my name, when and where you think proper. If it does you the least service, the end for which it is written will be answered. Call at Moxon's, Bond Street, and let him give you from me, for your children, a copy of the Selections he has just published from my poems."

A year before this time, on the 2d of June 1830, Wordsworth wrote to Edward Moxon, London, congratulating him on beginning business as a publisher for himself, and hoping to be able to help him at Cambridge.

"As to publishing anything myself, I am not prepared for it, but I believe the edition of my poems of '27 is now low ;

and, in consequence of an urgent application, I have entertained some thoughts of republishing, when this edition is all sold, in a cheap form—something under a pound, instead of 45s., the present price. I should like to know from experienced persons whether such a mode of publication would be likely to repay me. Perhaps you may be able to throw some light on the subject. . . .—Very sincerely yours,

W. WORDSWORTH."

Next year—on the 9th of June 1831—he wrote to Moxon from Rydal, giving him a list of errata, apparently for the volume of Selections from his poems, which had been made by Mr. Hine.

"As to improving the selection in another edition, I am very sceptical about that. You would find no two persons agreeing upon what was best; and upon the whole, tell Mr. H. . . that I think he has succeeded full as well, if not better, than most other persons would have done. . . ." He adds: "Mr. Leigh Hunt is a coxcomb, was a coxcomb, and ever will be a coxcomb.—I am, faithfully yours, W. WORDSWORTH."

In the following month he wrote to Moxon from Rydal—July 21, 1831:—

"MY DEAR SIR,— . . . I have an aversion little less than insurmountable to having anything to do with periodicals. . . If I could bring myself, out of personal kindness for any editor or proprietor of a periodical, to contribute, it would be to the channel of Alaric Watts, who has a sort of claim upon me, for literary civilities, and intended services, some time ago. . . .

And now may I take the liberty of expressing my regret that you should have been tempted into this experiment at all? . . . It strikes me that there is something like attempting to take the public by storm in putting forth your personal friends in the way you propose to do. The public is apt to revolt at any such step. . . ."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

FOURTH VISIT TO SCOTLAND—SIR WALTER SCOTT—1831.

THOUGH belonging to the previous year, I have reserved for this chapter some correspondence between Sir Walter Scott and Wordsworth, as it forms a fitting preface to the visit of the latter to Abbotsford in 1831:—

“ *Rydal Mount, June 7th* [1830].

MY DEAR SIR WALTER,—Being upon a visit lately to Workington Hall, I there met with the elder brother by the father's side of Mr. Curwen, of that place—Mr. Christian of Unerigg, in Cumberland, and deemster of the Isle of Man. He asked if I was acquainted with you. I replied that I had for thirty years, nearly, had that honour, and spoke of you with that warmth I am accustomed to feel upon such an occasion. He then told me that Professor Wilson, at his request, had some time ago undertaken to write to you upon a point in which innocently you had been the cause of a good deal of uneasiness to him. You will guess, perhaps, that he alluded to the novel *Peveril of the Peak*. So it was. The conduct and character of his ancestor, Christian, had there been represented, he said, in colours which were utterly at variance with the truth, and threw unmerited discredit upon his family. He said that the great historic families of the country were open to the fictions of men of genius, the *facts* being known to all persons of education; but in the case of a private family like his, it was very different—a false impression was easily made, and could

not be obviated or corrected in the present instance, except by an acknowledgment from the author himself. . . . He was prepared, he said, to furnish you, if you wished it, with documents unquestionably proving that Christian was entitled to, and possessed the gratitude of, the *Isle-of-Manners* of his own and subsequent times, and that he was idolised in the country as a martyr, I suppose in a good cause. I replied that no one, I was sure, had a greater respect for ancestry than yourself, and that I could not think you would regard me as an unwarrantable intruder if I repeated his wish that some notice should be found in the following edition, by which the reader might be set right as to the real character of the person who came to so melancholy an end. . . . —My dear Scott, ever-lastingly yours,
WM. WORDSWORTH."

To this letter Scott replied in a letter addressed to Wordsworth at "Mount Rydal," and dated from Edinburgh, 2d July 1830 :—

"DEAREST WORDSWORTH,—I would instantly have answered your kind letter as soon as received, but I have been obliged to go, as we express it, *over the water*—that is, to cross the Forth, to look after some property of Walter's. His predecessors had done a thing not easily repaired, and drained a mire of about a hundred acres, leaving the ancient castle of a certain Baron de Lochore 'beggared and outraged.' It would, however, I fear, be outraging the character of antiquary to restore this noble grange, by flooding about £200 a year of property; besides that, I suspect the present proprietor would be more curious about a modern pit, or ravelin, than the venerable towers of the said knight of old; so I shall leave them to their fate, rejoicing that we have no concern in the sacrilege.

I do not the less sympathise with Mr. Christian that I think the cause of his grief or displeasure is a little fantastic;

for, after all, his namesake is an imaginary character in an imaginary story; and I will take pains to be as explicit as I possibly can in the new edition upon this point, and with the courtesy of Bellini's Lion, that my rogue has no reference to any person that actually existed. I had copies many years since of all the papers referring to Mr. Christian's execution, and it struck me as one of those ambiguous events happening during the time of deadly feud, to which the passions and prejudice of both parties at the time threw a light so various and so doubtful, as [to] render it something difficult for posterity to find a fair estimate of it. I would be most happy to receive and avail myself in this edition of any communications which Mr. Christian may be disposed to honour me with. If I had known the unfortunate Mr. Christian had a direct descendant alive I would probably have given the story a different turn. But the name is little known on our northern side of the Border, as is intimated by an old story. A poor woman coming into Moffat, a country village, late in a winter night, knocked at several doors for quarters, which the inhabitants rudely refused. At last she exclaimed aloud, 'Good Heaven! are there no *Christians* in this place?' A window then flew open, and a person, thinking she inquired after some one of that name, replied, 'Na, na, woman, we're nae Christians here; we are all Johnstones and Jardines'—against which surnames the story is often told as a joke. . . .

And now, my dear Wordsworth, don't you remember something of a promise broken, and propose to repair it next year? I hope you mean to visit Abbotsford, and bring with you as many of your family as you possibly can. You will find me in my glory; as I hope, for a short time at least, to have all my children with me; and the Lockharts have taken up their residence at a little cottage of mine in the vicinity, called Chiefswood, which is a very sweet little retreat. So pray come, and make good your old promise. Bring as many of

your family as you can. Mrs. Wordsworth and Miss Wordsworth will, I hope, think themselves at home, as well as my early acquaintance, Miss Dorothea. Pray think of this soon, and assure yourself nothing can be more agreeable; and we have plenty of room, besides flocks and barns.

There is a new reign, which may bring hope to many, but to me only the sad recollection that the late King was very kind and civil to me.—Believe me always, yours affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

To this letter Wordsworth replied as follows:—

"Rydal Mount—sometimes called Idle Mount, and in your address of June last mis-named Mount Rydal,—20th July [1831]."

I feel truly obliged, dear Sir Walter, by your attention to Mr. Christian's wishes. He is perfectly satisfied. When I mentioned the matter to you I had not the least suspicion of an event being in progress which has already connected me with the family of Christian by a tie much stronger than that of common acquaintance. My eldest son has been accepted by Miss Curwen, with the entire approbation of her parents, as her future husband, and they are soon to be married. She is now upon a visit to us, and we are quite charmed with her amiable disposition, her gentleness, her delicacy, her modesty, her sound sense, and right notions; so that my son has a prospect before him as bright as man can wish for."

Before starting for Scotland Wordsworth wrote to John Kenyon from Rydal on September 9th:—

* * * * *

"The summer that is over has been with us as well as with you a brilliant one, for sunshine and fair calm weather—brilliant also for its unexampled gaiety in regattas, balls, dejeunes, pic-nics, by the lake-side, on the islands, and on the mountain-tops, fireworks by night, dancing on the green-

sward by day—in short, a fever of pleasure from morn to dewy eve—from dewy eve till break of day. Our youths and maidens, like Chaucer's Squire, 'have slept no more than doth the nightingale,' and our old men have looked as bright as Tithonus when his withered cheek reflected the blushes of Aurora upon the first declaration of her passion for him. In the room where I am now dictating, we had, three days ago a dance—forty beaus and belles, besides matrons, ancient spinsters and greybeards—and to-morrow in this same room we are to muster for a venison feast. Why are you not here either to enjoy, or to philosophise upon this dissipation? Our party to-morrow is not so large but that we could find room for you and Mrs. Kenyon. The disturbed state of the Continent is no doubt the reason why, in spite of the Reform Bill, such multitudes of pleasure-hunters have found their way this summer to the Lakes.

After so much levity, Mary shall transcribe for you a serious stanza or two, intended for an inscription in a part of the grounds of Rydal Mount with which you are not acquainted—a field adjoining our garden which I purchased two or three years ago.

Under the shade of some pollard oaks, and on a green terrace in that field, we have lived no small part of the long bright days of the summer gone by; and in a hazel nook of this favourite piece of ground, is a Stone, for which I wrote one day the following serious Inscription. You will forgive its egotism.

In these fair Vales, hath many a Tree
At Wordsworth's suit been spared,
And from the Builder's hand this Stone
For some rude beauty of its own,
Was rescued by the Bard;
Long may it rest in peace, & here
Perchance the tender-hearted
Will heave a gentle sigh for him
As One of the Departed."

In the autumn of 1831, Wordsworth started on his fourth Scottish Tour, accompanied this time by his daughter Dora. His memorial of this tour was a series of poems, published in 1835, and entitled *Yarrow Revisited, and other Poems*. His aim, however, was mainly to see Sir Walter Scott before his departure for Italy.

On his way to Abbotsford, Wordsworth was detained in Carlisle for a day or two, and his daughter Dora wrote thus for her father to Sir Walter :—

“*Carlisle, Sept. 16.*”

MY DEAR SIR WALTER,—‘*There’s a man wi’ a veil, and a lass drivin’*,’ exclaimed a little urchin, as we entered Merrie Carlisle a couple of hours ago, on our way to Abbotsford. . . .

A nephew of mine,* a student of Christchurch—and I may add, a distinguished one—to whom I could not but allow the pleasure of accompanying us, has taken the Newcastle road into Scotland, hoping to join me at Abbotsford. If he should arrive before us, let him be no restraint upon you whatever. Let him loose in your library, or on the Tweed with his fishing-rod, or in the stubble with his gun (he is but a novice of a shot, by-the-bye), and he will be no trouble to any part of your family.—I am, very affectionately yours, W. W.”

They arrived at Abbotsford on the 21st September. Wordsworth gives a very interesting, though sad and touching, account of the visit in the note dictated to Miss Fenwick. Sir Walter, his son Major Scott, and Anne his daughter, the Lockharts, Allan the artist, and Laidlaw, Scott’s friend, were at Abbotsford with some others—one of Burns’s sons having just left. Songs were sung in the evening, and old ballads chaunted to the playing of the harp, while humorous stories were told, and acted merrily; and Sir Walter—though much changed from the bright hopeful man he was when, with

* Afterwards Bishop Wordsworth of St. Andrews.

Wordsworth at Patterdale a few years before, he said he “meant to live till he was *eighty*, and to write as long as he lived”—was as full of enjoyment as was possible. Next day he accompanied the Wordsworths to some of his favourite haunts, including Newark Castle in Yarrow. Wordsworth says:—
“On our return in the afternoon we had to cross the Tweed directly opposite Abbotsford. The wheels of our carriage grated upon the pebbles in the bed of the stream that there flows somewhat rapidly; a rich but sad light, of rather a purple than a golden hue, was spread over the Eildon Hills at that moment; and, thinking it probable that it might be the last time Sir Walter would cross the stream, I was not a little moved, and expressed some of my feelings in the sonnet beginning,

A trouble, not of clouds, or weeping rain.

At noon on Thursday we left Abbotsford; and in the morning of that day Sir Walter and I had a serious conversation *tête-à-tête*, when he spoke with gratitude of the happy life which, upon the whole, he had led. He had written in my daughter's album, before he came into the breakfast-room that morning, a few stanzas addressed to her; and while putting the book into her hand in his own study, standing by his desk, he said to her in my presence, ‘I should not have done anything of this kind but for your father's sake; they are probably the last verses I shall ever write.’ They show how much his mind was impaired, not by the strain of thought, but by the excitation; some of the lines being imperfect, and one stanza wanting corresponding rhymes. One letter, the initial S, had been omitted in the spelling of his own name. They are as follows:—

’Tis well the gifted eye which saw
The first light sparks of fancy burn,
Should mark its latest flash with awe
Low gleaming from its funeral urn.

And thou may'st mark the hint, fair maid—
 How vain is worldly esteem,
 Good fortune turns—affections fade—
 And fancy is an idle dream.

Yet not on this poor frame alone,
 My palsied hand, and deafened ear,
 But on my countrie's fate . . .
 The bolts of fate seemed doomed to spend.

The storm might whistle round my head,
 I would not deprecate the ill,
 So I might say when all was sped—
 My country, be thou glorious still.

W. COTT."

The reference in the Abbotsford sonnet to "the might of the whole world's good wishes," and the lines—

Blessings and prayers in nobler retinue
 Than sceptred king or laurelled conqueror knows,
 Follow this wondrous Potentate,

—are a sufficient commentary on Lamb's remark that true poets know no jealousies, and counterbalance anything that Wordsworth incidentally, and (when in a critical mood) justly, said of the poems of the greatest of all modern novelists.

In his *Autobiography* Henry Taylor* refers, in a specially interesting way, to this visit of Wordsworth to Scott, and to both of the poets:—

"In the autumn of 1831 I paid a visit to the Lakes, and after passing some time in the society of Southey and Wordsworth, it occurred to me that I ought to make an effort to see Walter Scott, whose health had been broken by more than one shock of paralysis, and who might not be much longer to be seen in this world. . . . I was much and mournfully impressed with his manner and appearance. There was a homely dignity, and a sad composure in them, which perhaps belonged to his state of health, and to a consciousness that his end was not

* Vol. i. pp. 178-82.

far off; and along with these there was the simplicity and singleness he must have had from nature. . . .

I had brought him word that Wordsworth intended to pay him a visit later in the autumn. He answered, 'Wordsworth must come soon, or he will not find me here.' I understood this as said in contemplation of his approaching death; but perhaps it had reference only to his intended departure for Naples, whither he went not long after to escape the English winter. Wordsworth paid him the proposed visit, and of that came the sonnet written on the occasion of his departure. It is a sonnet which I often repeat to myself. . . .

Wordsworth and Scott dwelt in regions as far apart as it was possible for men to occupy who each covered so large a space. Neither, I should think, could appreciate the other in full measure; but Scott would perhaps go nearer to a full appreciation of Wordsworth, than Wordsworth of Scott;* and I value the more on this account the feeling expressed in this grand valedictory sonnet.

They were as little alike in their aspect as in their genius. The only thing common to both countenances was that neither expressed a limitation. You might not have divined from either frontispiece the treasures of the volume,—it was not likely that you should;—but when you knew that there they were, there was nothing but what harmonized with your knowledge. Both were the faces of considerable men. Scott's had a character of rusticity. Wordsworth's was a face which did not assign itself to any class. It was a hardy, weather-beaten old face, which might have belonged to a nobleman, a yeoman, a mariner, or a philosopher; for there was so much of a man that you lost sight of superadded distinctions. For my own part I should not, judging by his face, have guessed him to

* Haydon once said, 'Scott's success would have made Wordsworth insufferable, while Wordsworth's failure would not have rendered Scott a whit less delightful.' (See *Life of B. R. Haydon*, vol. ii. p. 12.)

be a poet. To my eyes there was more of strength than refinement in the face. But I think he took a different view of it himself. Whatever view he took, if occasion arose, he would be sure to disclose it; for his thoughts went naked. I was once discussing with him the merits of a picture of himself hanging on the wall in Lockhart's house in London. Some one had said it was like :

‘Yes,’ he replied, ‘I cannot deny that there is a likeness; such a likeness as the artist could produce; it is like me so far as *he* could go in me; it is like if you suppose all the finer faculties of the mind to be withdrawn: that, I should say, is Wordsworth, a Chancellor of the Exchequer,—Wordsworth, the Speaker of the House of Commons.’

In this there was not more vanity than belongs to other men; the difference being that what there was, like everything else in him, was wholly undisguised. He naturally took an interest in his own looks, and wished to take the most favourable view of them; as most men do, though most men do not make mention of it. And there is something to be said for his view. Perhaps what was wanting was only *physical* refinement. It was a rough grey face, full of rifts and clefts and fissures, out of which, some one said, you might expect lichens to grow. But Miss Fenwick, who was familiar with the face in all its moods, could see *through* all this; and so could I too at times. The failure of the face to express all that it might have expressed was indicated by Coleridge with characteristic subtlety and significance. He said that Chantrey's bust of Wordsworth was more like Wordsworth than Wordsworth was like himself.”

Wordsworth went with his daughter from Abbotsford to Roslin, and thence to the Trossachs, where one of the finest of his later sonnets—coloured, he tells us, by the remembrance of his recent visit to Sir Walter, and his melancholy errand

to Italy—was composed, thence to the West Highlands, to Glen Etive (where they spent a week), to Mull, back to Tyndrum and Killin, thence to Glencroe, Loch Lomond, Bothwell, Hamilton, etc. Rubens's picture of Daniel in the lions' den at Hamilton Palace gave rise to a sonnet, in connection with which Henry Crabb Robinson's account of the picture, in *his* Scottish tour of 1821, may be read with interest.

"Hamilton Palace, 29th September. . . . Rubens's picture of Daniel in the lions' den, a wonderful work. The variety of character in the lions is admirable. One fancies that one can enter into their feelings much more easily than into those of the prophet. They are respectively indignant at the power (to them unintelligible) which restrains them, or they reverence the being they dare not touch. One consoles himself by the contemplation of the last skull he picked, another is consoling himself by the hopes of his next meal. Two are debating the matter together. But the prophet, with a face like Curran's, foreshortened so as to lose its best expression, sits with all his muscles in the extreme tension of terror. He looks upward, but not with joy or hope, and seems to expect that, though not yet devoured, his fate is not the less certain. It is a painting rather to astonish than delight."

The following is one of the few letters we have from Dora Wordsworth, the poet's daughter. It was written to Miss Hamilton, Rowan Hamilton's sister, shortly after she returned with her father from their tour in Scotland:—

*"RYDAL MOUNT, October 26, 1831.**

MY DEAR MISS HAMILTON.— . . . Father and I were among the Highlands when your brother's last letter arrived—a late season for touring, you may think—and so it was, but the additional beauty given to the colouring of the woods by

* See the *Life of Sir W. Rowan Hamilton*, vol. i. pp. 471-3.

October's workmanship,* and to the mountains by her mists and vapours and rainbows, reflected again and again both in the waters and on the clouds, more than compensated for shortened days and broken weather. Father has called Scotland the 'Land of Rainbows.' I, who had never been in Scotland, was more delighted than words can tell; but may be I am not an unprejudiced judge. I could not look at Inversnaid, 'The lake, the bay, the waterfall,' nor at that 'Wild Relique! beauteous as the chosen spot In Nysa's isle, the embellished Grot,' etc., with common eyes. Almost every spot of peculiar interest was interesting to me, for my father's sake, more so even than its own. And Yarrow too, and 'Newark's towers'; and here I was introduced, not only by my father, but by Sir Walter Scott; so one cannot imagine a place seen under happier circumstances. Our main object in leaving home was a visit to Abbotsford, which had long been promised; and Sir Walter's state of health, and his great wish to see my father, determined him to undertake the journey, late in the year as it was, and bad as were his eyes. When so near Edinburgh, it was a pity to return without a peep at that fine city; and then—finding travelling agreed with his eyes—we crept on into the Highlands, and as far as Mull. Staffa was the height of my travelling ambition, but that we could not accomplish; the steamboat had ceased to ply, and it was much too late to trust our precious lives to an open boat. . . . I will only add a sonnet which was written a day or two after we left Abbotsford, which was only the day before Sir Walter was to quit it for Italy, and for his health's sake—

A trouble, not of clouds, or weeping rain,

.

. . . All are well, father, mother, and aunts, the first-mentioned still prophesying ruin and desolation to this hitherto flourish-

* Compare the line in the sonnet on *The Trossachs*—
October's workmanship to rival May.

ing spot of earth. The evil which he foresees from this dreadful Reform Bill quite weighs his spirit down. Our tour was a happy event, for it gave fresh impulse to his muse, and he has been able to drown his political thoughts and feelings for a time in his poetical ones. We did not see a newspaper for five weeks, and only heard by accident of the bill being kicked out—were we not to be envied? but I have got to *we*, and Scotland again!

. . . We have at present with us a very dear and old friend of my father's, Mr. Jones, his travelling companion in the pedestrian tour over the Alps. He lives in Wales, of which country, as his name tells, he is a native. . . .—Your affectionate friend.

DORA WORDSWORTH."

Her aunt Dorothy, writing to Crabb Robinson, December 1, 1831, said of her brother in this tour: "Such was his leaning to old pedestrian habits, that he often walked from fifteen to twenty miles in a day, following by the side of the little carriage, of which his daughter was the charioteer." *

Other letters from Wordsworth to Hamilton may follow this.

"Rydal Mount, October 27, 1831.

. . . In a former letter you mention Francis Edgeworth. . . . He was struck with my mention of a sound in the eagle's notes much and frequently resembling the yelping and barking of a dog, and quoted a passage in *Æschylus* where the eagle is called the flying hound of the air; and he suggested that *Æschylus* might not only allude by that term to his being a bird of chase or prey, but also to this barking voice, which I do not recollect ever hearing noticed. The

* A postscript to this letter says: 'Christopher Wordsworth' (her nephew, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln) 'is in Italy; Charles' (her nephew, now Bishop of St. Andrews) 'has pupils at Oxford,' one of them being W. E. Gladstone.

other day I was forcibly reminded of the circumstances under which the pair of eagles were seen that I described in the letter to Mr. Edgeworth, his brother. [It was at the promontory of Fair-head, on the coast of Antrim, and no spectacle could be grander.] At Dunolly Castle, a ruin seated at the tip of one of the horns of the bay of Oban, I saw, the other day, one of these noble creatures cooped up among the ruins, and was incited to give vent to my feelings, as you shall now see:—

Dishonoured rock and ruin ! that by law,

.

You will naturally wish to hear something of Sir Walter Scott, and particularly of his health. I found him a good deal changed within the last three or four years, in consequence of some shocks of the apoplectic kind, but his friends say that he is very much better ; and the last accounts, up to the time of his going on board, were still more favourable. I trust the world and his friends may be hopeful, with good reason, that the life and faculties of this man—who has during the last six-and-twenty years diffused more innocent pleasure than ever fell to the lot of any human being to do in his own lifetime—may be spared. Voltaire, no doubt, was full as extensively known ; and filled a larger space, probably, in the eye of Europe, for he was a great theatrical writer (which Scott has not proved himself to be), and miscellaneous to that degree that there was something for all classes of readers ; but the pleasure afforded by his writings—with the exception of some of his tragedies and minor poems—was not pure, and in this Scott is greatly his superior. As Dora has told your sister, Sir W. was our guide to Yarrow ; the pleasure of that day induced me to add a third to the two poems upon Yarrow—*Yarrow Revisited*. It is in the same measure, and as much in the same spirit as matter of fact would allow. You are artist enough to know that it is next to impossible

entirely to harmonise things that rest upon their poetic credibility, and are idealised by distance of time and space, with those that rest upon the evidence of the hour, and have about them the thorny points of actual life." *

" November 22, 1831.

. . . Again and again I must repeat, that the composition of verse is infinitely more of an art than men are prepared to believe, and absolute success in it depends upon innumerable *minutiae*, which it grieves me you should stoop to acquire a knowledge of. Milton says of pouring 'easy his unpremeditated verse.' It would be harsh, untrue, and odious to say there is anything like cant in this; but, it is not *true* to the letter, and tends to mislead. I could point out to you five hundred passages in Milton, upon which labour has been bestowed, and twice five hundred more to which additional labour would have been serviceable: not that I regret the absence of such labour, because no poem contains more proof† of skill acquired by practice. . . .

Coleridge's most intimate friend is Mr. Green—a man of science, and a distinguished surgeon; if to him you could procure an introduction, he would let you know the state of Coleridge's health; and to Mr. Green, whom I once saw, you might use my name, with a view to further your wish, if it were at all needful.

Shakespeare's sonnets (excuse this leap) are not upon the Italian model, which Milton's are; they are merely quatrains with a couplet tacked to the end; and if they depended much on the versification, they would unavoidably be heavy.

One word upon Reform in Parliament—a subject to which somewhat reluctantly you allude. You are a Reformer! Are you an approver of the Bill as rejected by the Lords? or, to

* See *Life of Sir W. Rowan Hamilton*, vol. i. pp. 491-3.

† Than *Paradise Lost*, he doubtless means.

use Lord Grey's words, anything 'as efficient'? (he means—if he means anything—for producing change); then I earnestly exhort you to devote hours and hours to the study of human nature, in books, in life, and in your own mind; and beg and pray that you will mix with society, not in Ireland and Scotland only, but in England; a Fount of Destiny, which if once poisoned, away goes all hope of quiet progress in well-doing. The Constitution of England, which seems about to be destroyed, offers to my mind the sublimest contemplation which the history of society and governments have ever presented to it: and for this cause especially, that its principles have the character of preconceived ideas, archetypes of the pure intellect, while they are in fact the results of a humble-minded experience. Think about this. Apply it to what we are threatened with, and farewell."

After Hamilton had met Coleridge at Highgate, he sent the following comparison of him with Wordsworth to Mr. Aubrey de Vere:—

"Observatory, May 28, 1832.

... Coleridge is rather to be considered as a Faculty than as a Mind; and I did so consider him. I seemed rather to listen to an oracular voice, to be circumfused in a Divine $\delta\mu\phi\eta$, than—as in the presence of Wordsworth—to hold commune with an exalted man."

The state of his sister's health was now a continual sorrow to the poet, and cast a shadow over his declining years. When he first heard of her illness at Whitwick, he wrote to Robinson:—

"I have entered my *sixtieth* year; strength must be failing, and snappings off (as the danger my dear sister has just

escaped lamentably proves) ought not to be long out of sight.

What a shock that was to our poor hearts! Were she to depart, the Phasis of my Moon would be robbed of light to a degree that I have not courage to think of."

In the same letter, however, the old passion for travelling asserted itself. He once said that, as Writing was Southey's ruling passion, Wandering was his. Wordsworth seems almost to have agreed with Goethe—

To make room for wandering was it,
That the world was made so wide.

He says: "My sister-in-law, Joanna Hutchinson, and her brother Henry, an ex-sailor, are about to embark for Norway. Were I not tied at home, I should certainly accompany them. As far as I can look back, I discern in my mind imaginative traces of Norway. The people are said to be simple and worthy, and *Nature* is magnificent. I have heard Sir H. Davy affirm that there is nothing equal to some of the ocean inlets of that region."

A year and a half later (February 1833) he wrote to Robinson:—

"I am come to that time of life when I must be prepared to part with, or to precede, my dearest friends; and God's will be done!"

Writing to his daughter's friend, Miss Kinnaird (now Mrs. Drummond) from Rydal, on the 30th January 1833, he said of his sister: "Her state weighs incessantly upon every thought of my heart."

Dorothy Wordsworth's long illness was borne with patient resignation. In a letter to Lady Beaumont, January 1834, she said: "My prison! (if we may so call it) is one of the prettiest and most cheerful in England." She occasionally amused

herself by writing verses. One set of these, addressed in the year 1837 to Thomas Carr, her medical attendant, beginning—

Five years of sickness and of pain,

she copied out, and sent to her cousin, with the following letter:—

“MY DEAR COUSIN EDWARD,—A madman might as well attempt to relate the history of his own doings, and those of his fellows in confinement, as I to tell you one hundredth part of what I have felt, suffered, and done.

Through God’s mercy I am now calm and easy.

I have not seen Charles Lamb’s book. His sister still survives—a solitary twig—patiently enduring the storm of life. In losing her brother she lost her all—all but the remembrance of him, which cheers her the day through.

May God bless you.—Yours ever truly,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

Sunday, Rydal Mount, October 8th, 1837.”

Added to this domestic sorrow was Wordsworth’s dread of the overthrow of our national Institutions, by radical changes effected on these great inheritances in Church and State. His letters at this time are full of the subject; and in the next chapter specimens of them will be given. The one which follows, addressed to Hamilton, refers both to his sister, to Coleridge, and to Walter Savage Landor.

“*Moresby, June 25, 1832.*

. . . My dear sister has been languishing more than seven months in a sick-room, nor dare I or any of her friends entertain a hope that her strength will ever be restored; and the course of public affairs, as I think I told you before, threatens, in my view, destruction to the Institutions of the country; an event which, whatever may rise out of it hereafter, cannot but produce distress and misery for two or three generations at

least. In any times I am but at best a poor and unpunctual correspondent, yet I am pretty sure you would have heard from me but for this reason; therefore let the statement pass for an apology as far as you think fit. . . .

It gives me much pleasure that you and Coleridge have met, and that you were not disappointed in the conversation of a man from whose writings you had previously drawn so much delight and improvement. He and my beloved sister are the two beings to whom my intellect is most indebted, and they are now proceeding, as it were *pari passu*, along the path of sickness—I will not say towards the grave, but I trust towards a blessed immortality.

It was not my intention to write so seriously; my heart is full, and you must excuse it. You do not tell me how you like Cambridge as a place, nor what you thought of its buildings and other works of art. Did you not see Oxford as well? It has greatly the advantage over Cambridge in its happy intermixture of streets, churches, and collegiate buildings.

. . . A fortnight ago I came hither to my son and daughter, who are living a gentle, happy, quiet, and useful life together. My daughter Dora is also with us. . . A week ago appeared here Mr. W. S. Landor the poet, and author of the *Imaginary Conversations*, which probably have fallen in your way. We had never met before, though several letters had passed between us, and as I had not heard that he was in England, my gratification in seeing him was heightened by surprise. We passed a day together at the house of my friend Mr. Rawson, on the banks of Wast-Water. His conversation is lively and original, his learning great, though he will not allow it, and his laugh the heartiest I have heard for a long time. It is, I think, not much less than twenty years since he left England for France and afterwards Italy, where he hopes to end his days,—nay, has fixed near Florence upon the spot where he wishes to be buried."

An undated letter to Basil Montagu, acknowledging a volume of *Selections* (from whom, or of what, is not ascertained), contains the following remarks on the state of "public affairs":—

"What you Londoners may think of public affairs I know not;—but I forebode the not very distant overthrow of the Institutions under which this country has so long prospered. The Liberals of our neighbourhood tell me that the mind of the nation has outgrown its Institutions; rather say, I reply, that it has shrunk and dwindled from them, as the body of a sick man does from his clothes.

We are on fire with zeal to educate the poor, which would be all very well if that zeal did not blind us to what we stand still more in need of, an improved education of the middle and upper classes; which ought to begin in our great public schools, thence ascend to the universities (from which the first suggestion should come) and descend to the very nursery.

If the book from which your *Selections* are made were the favourite reading of men of rank and influence I should dread little from the discontented in any class. But what hope is there of such a rally in our debilitated intellects? The soundest hearts (with few exceptions) I meet with are Americans. They seem to have a truer sense of the benefits of our Government than we ourselves have. Farewell, with many thanks.—Yours faithfully,
W. W."

In connection with this letter to Montagu, a sentence of Southey's to Henry Taylor on the 16th July 1831 may be quoted. He was writing of the political state of the country, and said, "I saw Wordsworth last week. He is more desponding than I; and perhaps I despond less than I should, if I saw more clearly before me." *

* See Southey's *Life and Correspondence*, vol. vi. p. 155.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CORRESPONDENCE—LITERARY CRITICISM—FIFTH AND LAST TOUR IN SCOTLAND, 1832-1834.

WORDSWORTH'S letter to Rowan Hamilton, November 22, 1831,* states his opinion as to the Reform Bill, and its relation to the English Constitution. But his correspondence with others on this subject—notably with Lord Lonsdale—has more than a passing interest. Although the controversy has long since closed, these letters of Wordsworth deal with principles underlying political controversy, which have a perennial value, while our Parliamentary debates, like “our little systems,” “have their day, and cease to be.”

The following are extracts from a letter to Lord Lonsdale, dated Rydal Mount, Feb. 17th, 1832 :—

“As you have done me the honour of asking my opinion on Lord H.'s† letter, I will give it without reserve. . . . The facts upon which Lord H.'s proposal of compromise is grounded are an increased majority in the Commons in favour of the Bill, and a belief that the Ministers have *carte blanche* for creating Peers to carry it. . . . Is it not in the power of any councillors having access to the King to convince him not only of the ruinous tendency of such a step, but to make him feel, as a point of duty, that whatever power the forms of law may give him to create Peers for setting aside their deliberate resolve, the *spirit* of the Constitution allows him no right

* See page 209.

† Lord Holland.

to do so? for the application of such power to particular emergencies is subversive of the principle for which the Peers mainly exist. Again, the Ministers opened the question of Reform with a most solemn declaration that it was a measure indispensable for the preservation of the Constitution, and adopted in order to preserve it. Yet for the sake of carrying their Bill they are prepared to destroy a vital organ of that Constitution. A virtual destruction it certainly would be; for it would convert the House of Lords into a mere slave of any succeeding Ministry; which, should it not bend to threats, would immediately create new votes to counterbalance the Opposition. Cannot, then, Lord Grey and his coadjutors be brought, by a respect for reason, or by a sense of shame from being involved in such a contradiction and absurdity, to desist from that course? . . .

As to the alternative of compromise, I agree with Mr. Southey in thinking that little is to be gained by it but time for profiting by contingencies. Would the House of Lords be sure of making such alterations in their Committee as would render the Bill much less mischievous? or, if they should, would the Lower House pass the Bill so amended? The manner in which the Committee of the Commons dealt with it is far from encouraging. . . . Suppose, however, the Bill to be much improved in passing through the Committee of the Lords, and accepted by the Commons, how do we stand then? We have a House of Lords, not overwhelmed, indeed, by new members, but in spirit broken and brought down upon its knees. The Bill is passed, and Parliament, I presume, speedily dissolved; for the agitators of the political unions would clamour for this, which neither the present, nor any Ministry likely to succeed them, would resist: even did they think it right to do so. Then comes a new House of Commons, to what degree Radical, under the best possible modification of the present Bill, one fears to think of. It proposes measures

which the House of Lords would resist as revolutionary, but dares not—for fear of being served in the way that was threatened to secure the passing of the Reform Bill ; and so we hasten step by step to the destruction of that Constitution in form, the spirit of which had been destroyed before. . . .

If a new Reform Bill cannot be brought forward and carried by a strong appeal to the sense, and not to the passions, of the country, I think there is no rational ground for hope. And here one is reminded of the folly and the rashness, not to touch upon the injustice, of creating such a gap in the old constituency, as it is scarcely possible to fill up without endangering the existence of the State. Nevertheless, I cannot but think that the country might still be preserved from revolution by a more sane Ministry, which would undertake the question of Reform with prudence and sincerity ; combining with that measure wiser views in finance. . . .

It has ever been the habit of my mind to trust that expediency will come out of fidelity to principles, rather than to seek my principle of action in calculations of expediency. . . .”

A week later—February 24th—Wordsworth wrote a very long letter to the same friend, of which the following is part :—

“ *Rydal Mount, Feb. 24th, 1832.*

MY LORD,— . . . The Ministers have declared over and over that they will not abate a jot of the *principle* of the Bill. Through the whole of the debates in both Houses, but particularly in the Commons, there has been a confusion between principle and the rules and measures of applying principle. The main or fundamental principle of this Bill is an assumed necessity for an increase of democratic power in the Legislature ; accordingly, the Ministers have resolved upon a sweeping destruction. This, which may be called a rule, or subsidiary principle, has been applied to the existing constituency in its

three great branches—the Burgage Tenures, the Freemen, and the Freeholders. What havoc has been made in the first we all know. The second, the Freemen, were destroyed, and are restored. Upon the third I cannot speak with the precision which I could wish, not distinctly recollecting the manner in which the votes of a portion of this body are to be affected by the franchise conferred upon them as £10 voters in towns, or retained as Freemen. None of this class of voters have been deprived of their right of voting without an equivalent; so that the change which time has effected in making, by the reduction in value of money, the body of Freeholders so democratic, is left in its full force, and made more dangerous by new circumstances. Now, is it to be expected that the Lords in Committee could succeed in a scheme for a less sweeping and less unjust destruction of the old constituency? Lord H. himself does not seem to expect it.

The only source, then, to which we can look for any improvement must be in supplying the gap in a less objectionable way. Numbers and property are the principles here. In order to foresee how the Ministry are likely to act, we must inquire how their power is composed. They know themselves that if it were not for the Reform Bill they must out instantly. As constitutional Whigs, then, supposed to be actuated by a sincere wish to preserve the British Constitution, the leaders of them are already, as a party, annihilated. They are the tools of men bent on the destruction of Church and State. Even in their opinions many who continue to call themselves Whigs are scarcely by a shade distinguishable from the Radicals. But though such is the character of so many of their prominent leaders, there is diffused through the country a large body of Whig partisans, who, could their eyes be opened, would cease to support them, especially if they had hopes of a more moderate measure from other quarters—but they are not likely to be undeceived till too late. The

Ministry, I repeat, are under Radical dictation ; does not the mere act of the late appointment to the Secretaryship of War show it? Still further to propitiate the Political Unions, Hume and Warburton will follow him into office, who can say how soon? Whatever, therefore, the Ministry in conscience think prudent and proper, they would not have the courage to act upon it: even supposing, as Lord H. suggests, that the more moderate men in the House, and those who have the fear of a Radical Parliament hanging over their heads, should support such improvement coming from the Lords. The Ministry would act, as your Lordship anticipates, by creating new peers, by seduction, and, I lament to say, by intimidation, and encouraging or conniving at agitation out of doors.

But to come to particulars. Could the £10 franchise be altered, or the delegation—for I will not call it representation—from London and its neighbourhood? As to the large towns all over the country, a worse source for a new constituency than £10 voters they do not, in my judgment, contain. But, take smaller places, and less populous districts. Mr. Senhouse thinks £10 not a bad qualification for Cumberland. Look then at Cockermouth, and read Mr. Green's late advertisement. He may be a man of poor talents and sorry discretion, but he is no stranger there. He was born, bred, and has long been a resident in the place. He may therefore reasonably be supposed to be acquainted with the present opinions and dispositions of the £10 renters in that town, to whom he would recommend himself, in the event of the Bill passing. He tells them 'that he has for many years been reproached for being a Jacobin, a Radical, and a Leveller'—unjustly, he insinuates,—that a reform is wanted for making *a great change* in the present state of things. 'Do not, however, suppose,' he adds, 'that I wish to see reform run into revolution. The conduct of the King, forming as it does a glorious contrast to that of most of the sovereigns that for half a

century have appeared in Europe, *has justly entitled him to the preservation of his crown*, etc. The conduct of the Ministers, too, who have aided and counselled him in his efforts for the public good must not be forgotten ; they all, or nearly all, belong to or are connected with the hereditary aristocracy, and by their services have at once entitled themselves to our gratitude,' etc., etc. Now what is all this but to say that the moment the King or the aristocracy do not please Mr. G. and his future constituents he will turn upon them, and, if he can, will destroy the monarchy and peerage together. Judge, my Lord, of my indignation when I read this trash—contemptible, were it not so pernicious in this emergency—addressed to the inhabitants of my native town.

Now for the Delegation of London, etc., with the vast population there and in its neighbourhood, to back the agitators whenever they shall choose to call upon it. Can Lord H. expect that the Ministry would consent to any improvement in this department ? Yet nothing is more clear to a sane mind than that the Government by King, Lords, and Commons, and not only Government, but Property—in a state of Society so artificial as ours—cannot long stand up against such a pressure. When I was in London last spring I mixed a good deal with the Radicals, and know from themselves what their aims are, and how they expect to accomplish them. One person at least, now high in office, is looked up to as their future head, and allowed at present to play a false part. It is not rationally to be expected that the present Ministry would allow the Delegation, as I have called it, of London and its neighbourhood to be of a less obnoxious construction than the Bill makes it.

Let us now look at the other side—the uncompromising resistance and its apprehended consequences in swamping the House of Lords, and passing the Bill in its present state, not perhaps without popular commotions. The risk attending such resistance with this or any Ministry not composed of firm-

mind and truly intelligent Men, is, I own, so great as to alarm any one; but I should have no fear of popular commotion were the Government what it might and ought to be. The overthrow of the government of Charles X., and the late events in Bristol, prove what mischief may be done by a mere rabble if the executive be either faithless or foolish. Seeing the perilous crisis to which we are come, I am nevertheless persuaded that, could a Conservative Ministry be established, the certain ruin that will follow on the passing of this Bill might be avoided. Thousands of respectable people have supported both Bills, not as approving of a measure of this character or extent, but from fear that otherwise no reform at all would take place. Such men would be ready to support more moderate plans if they found the executive in hands that could be relied upon. Too true it is, no doubt, as Lord H. has observed, that opinions as to the extent and nature of advisable reform differ so widely as to throw great difficulties in the way of a new Bill. But these, in my humble opinion, might be got over, so far as to place us upon ground allowing hope for the future.

In looking at the rule for applying the principle of numbers to supply a part of the new constituency, or govern the retention of the old, I have only considered London and its neighbourhood. As far as I know, this principle is altogether an innovation, and what contradictions and anomalies does it involve? The Lords would not probably attempt an improvement here. Had such a rule come down to us from past times, had we been habituated to it, it might have been possible to improve its application. But how can any thinking man expect that with the example of America and France before us—not deterring the people, but inciting them to imitation,—this innovation can ever find rest but in universal suffrage. Manchester is only to have two members, with its vast population, and Cocker mouth is to retain one with its bare

5000! Will not Manchester and Birmingham, etc., point on the one hand to the increased representation of London and its neighbourhood, and on the other to the small places which, for their paltry numbers, are allowed to retain one or two votes in the House; and to towns of the size of Kendal and Whitehaven, which for the first time are to send each a member? Will Manchester and Birmingham be content? Is it reasonable that they should be content with the principle of numbers so unjustly and absurdly applied? This anomaly, which is ably treated in the *American Review*, brings one to the character and tendency of this reform.

As Sir J. B. Walsh observes in his pamphlet, from which I saw an extract the other day in a newspaper, 'Extensive. sudden, and experimental innovation is diametrically opposed to the principle of progressiveness, which in every art, science, and path of human intellect is gradual. . . .'

. . . Our Constitution was not preconceived and planned beforehand; it grew under the protection of Providence, as a skin grows to, with, and for the human body. Our Ministers would flay this body, and present us, instead of its natural skin, with a garment made to order, which, if it be not rejected, will prove such a shirt as, in the fable, drove Hercules to madness and self-destruction. May God forgive that part of them who, acting in this affair with their eyes open, have already gone so far towards committing a greater political crime than any recorded in history!"

To his friend, the author of *Philip van Artevelde*—who was one of Wordsworth's most appreciative critics, and himself a poet of rare excellence,—he wrote on this same engrossing subject of Reform: "You are young, and therefore will naturally have more hope of public affairs than I can. Seeing principles—which after all are the only things worth contending about—sacrificed every day, in a manner which I

have foreseen since the passing of the Reform Bill, and indeed long before, does not the less disturb me. The predominance given in Parliament to the Dissenting interest, and to towns which have grown up recently, without a possibility of their being trained in habits of attachment either to the Constitution in Church and State, or what remained of the feudal frame of society in this country, will inevitably bring on a political and social revolution. What may be suffered by the existing generation no man can foresee, but the loss of liberty for a time will be the inevitable consequence. Despotism will be established, and the whole battle will be to be fought over by subsequent generations."

From the poem which Wordsworth prosaically called *The Warning*, it will be seen how great were his fears of the Reform Bill. It is not for his biographer to discuss that measure—the good or the evil it has done. *Actum est. Cadit quæstio.* It is the biographer's function only to record the poet's opinion of it, his fears regarding it, and to illustrate these, whether wise or unwise, by any other opinions expressed by him elsewhere.

On February 5, 1833, writing to Crabb Robinson, Wordsworth said: "You mistake in supposing me an Anti-Reformer. *That* I never was—but an Anti-Bill man, heart and soul. It is a fixed judgment of my mind that an unbridled Democracy is the worst of all tyrannies. Our Constitution had provided a check for the Democracy in the Regal Prerogative, influence, and power, and in the House of Lords, acting directly through its own body, and indirectly by the influence of individual Peers, over a certain portion of the House of Commons. The old system provided in practice a check both without and within. The extinction of the nomination-borough has nearly destroyed internal check. The House of Lords, as a body, have been trampled upon by the way in which the Bill has

been carried, and they are brought to that point that the Peers will prove useless as an external check, while the regal power and influence has become, or soon will, mere shadows.

She opened—but to shut
Exceeded her power,

as your friends the Bill-men of all denominations have found, or soon will find. Ever affectionately yours,

W. WORDSWORTH."

He wrote again to the same friend, in November of the same year, Mrs. Wordsworth being his amanuensis:—

"My opinion is that the people are bent upon the destruction of their ancient Institutions, and that nothing since—I will not say the passing—but the broaching of the Reform Bill could or can prevent it. I would bend my endeavours to strengthen to the utmost the rational portion of the Tory Party, but from no other hope than this, that the march towards destruction may be less rapid by their interposing something of a check—and the destruction of the Monarchy thereby attended with less injury to social order. They are more blind than bats or moles who cannot see that it is a change, or rather an overthrow, of social order as dependent upon the present distribution of property which is the object of the Radicals. They care nothing what may be the form of Government but as the changes may lead to that. As to France and your *juste milieu*, it is not worth talking about—(and I, M. W., will not write another word on this subject!)."

Mrs. Wordsworth's appendix to her husband's letter may fitly conclude his discussion of the Reform Bill.

The following sentence in one of his letters to Dr. Arnold, written on the 19th September 1832, refers to the purchase of Fox How for the Arnold family:—

“ Rydal Mount, Tuesday, 19th Sept.

MY DEAR SIR,—Yesterday Mr. Greenwood of Grasmere called with a letter he had just received from Mr. Simpson, the owner of Fox How, empowering Mr. G. to sign for him an agreement either with yourself or any friend you may appoint for the sale of that estate for £800, possession to be given and the money paid next Candlemas. . . . I need not say that it will give me pleasure to facilitate the purchase as far as is in my power. . . . Faithfully yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.”

To this must be added an extract from a letter of Mrs. Arnold written to a friend, Miss Trevenen, after they had settled at Fox How, telling of an incident at Rydal :—

“. . . We had a most delightful and memorable party last Wednesday evening. It was Dora’s tea-party to the children, to be given on the large island in Rydal Lake ; and though the children were delighted, they could not have enjoyed it more than the elder ones of the party. You must fancy Dora presiding in a sort of stone-built arch, fringed and embowered with trees, and floored with fresh moss, which the children had plucked to form a soft carpet for our feet. Above, the blue sky seen through the trees ; on one side the shrubby plants of heath and whortleberry and broom, rising, with rock scattered about, into a kind of mount ; while on the other side the ground sloped down to the lake, which glittered through the trees, and gave us, as the clear waters washed up to the rocky shore, the music I most love. To complete the picture, you must fancy Mr. Wordsworth stretched on the grass, and Mrs. Wordsworth, with an animation and sweetness which makes her plain face so agreeable, reading to us some of his *MS.* poetry.”

In May 1833, Mrs. Fletcher, afterwards the owner of Lancrigg, wrote thus in her *Autobiography* :—*

“In June our friend Mr. Harden took lodgings for us, for three months, at Thorney How, near Grasmere, to be near our dear friends the Arnolds, who were living that summer at Allan Bank, while their future home at Fox How was building. Our lodgings were in a simple farmhouse, at that time furnished in the most homely manner. We were the first ladies who had inhabited it, as it was before Easedale was much known, except to such as Wordsworth and De Quincey. . . . We did not then foresee that so many happy years were in store for us at the little mountain farm called Lancrigg, which adjoined Thorney How, and which—from its sunny aspect and birch and oak copses under Helm Crag—had for many years of Wordsworth’s Grasmere life been a favourite summer haunt of the simple household of the bard, who then lived at Town End. Wordsworth and Dr. Arnold also were great admirers of the views from the Rock at Thorney How, and the poet, if depressed on first coming in, was often revived by a visit to the Rock, which his wife kindly suggested when she saw this was the case. It was that summer that the illness of his sister began; and those who know what they had always been to each other can well understand what it must have been to him to see that soul of life and light obscured. He was also cast down at this time by the state of public affairs, of which he took a very dark view; and what was the opening of new hope for the evils of the country to Dr. Arnold, and to us, was, to Wordsworth and his family, the end of England’s glory. I have now lived to feel that we were both more in the right than our great poet at Rydal, and also the excellent and desponding Southey at Keswick, with whom I renewed an

* *Autobiography of Mrs. Fletcher*, pp. 213-15.

acquaintance formed long before, when we thought more alike on public matters."

To Rowan Hamilton Wordsworth wrote from Rydal Mount on 8th February 1833: "Your lecture I have read with much pleasure. It is philosophical, and eloquent, and instructive, and makes me regret, as I have had a thousand occasions of doing, that I did not apply to mathematics in my youth. It is now, and has long been, too late to make up for the deficiency.

. . . With regard to poetry, I must say that my mind has been kept this last year and more in such a state of anxiety, that all harmonies appear to have been banished from it, except those that reliance upon the goodness of God furnishes:

Tota de mente fugavi
Hæc studia, atque omnes *delicias* animi.*

This must be my excuse for writing, after so long an interval, a letter so dull."

To Charles Lamb he wrote from Rydal Mount, Friday, May 17:—

"MY DEAR LAMB,—I have to thank you and Moxon for a delightful volume, not I hope your last, of *Elia*. I have read it all, except some of the popular fallacies which I reserve, not to get through my cake all at once. The book has much pleased the whole of my family. . . . They all return their best thanks. I am not sure but I like the 'Old China' and 'The Wedding' as well as any of the Essays. I read 'Love me and love my dog' to my sister this morning. . . . She was much pleased; and, what is rather remarkable, this morning also I fell upon an anecdote in Madame D'Arblay's life of her father, where the other side of the question is agreeably illustrated. The heroes of the tale are David Garrick and a

* Catullus, *Carm.* lxxviii. *Ad Mallium*, v. 25.

favourite little spaniel of King Charles breed, which he left with the Burneys when he and Thomas Garrick went on their travels. In your remarks upon Martin's picture I entirely concur. May it not be a question whether your own imagination has not done a good deal for Titian's 'Bacchus and Ariadne.' With all my admiration for that great artist, I cannot think that either Ariadne or Theseus look so well on his canvas as they ought to do."

Of his sister, after referring to her illness, he said: "In tenderness of heart I do not, honestly, believe she was ever exceeded by any of God's creatures. Her loving-kindness has no bounds. God bless her for ever and ever."

In Robinson's *Diary* of June 1833 there is the following entry: "*June 17, 1833.* W. related to me this evening the origin of Lord B.'s animosity to him. W. wrote a letter to a lady warning her against hoping for public favour as a poetess, on account of her sensibility and true poetic feeling; and remarked that 'the only two poets of the day who enjoyed popularity were men, *one of whom had no feeling*, and the other had none but perverted feelings.' This letter had been *betrayed* to Lord B., who assigned this to Rogers as the justification, or at least excuse, for his attack on W."

In connection with this subject of Wordsworth and Byron, the following occurs in the *Budget of Paradoxes*, by Augustus de Morgan (p. 435):—

"Mr. Crabb Robinson told me the following story more than once. He was at Charles Lamb's chambers in the Temple when Wordsworth came in, with the new *Edinburgh Review* in his hand, and fume on his countenance. 'These reviewers,' said he, 'put me out of patience. Here is a young man—they say he is a lord—who has written a volume of poetry, and these fellows, just because he is a lord, set upon him,

laugh at him, and sneer at his writing. The young man will do something, if he goes on as he has begun. But these reviewers seem to think that nobody may write poetry, unless he lives in a garret.' Crabb Robinson told this long after to Lady Byron, who said, 'Ah! if Byron had known that, he would never have attacked Wordsworth.* He went one day to meet Wordsworth at dinner; when he came home I said, 'Well, how did the young poet get on with the old one?' 'Why, to tell you the truth,' said he, 'I had but one feeling from the beginning of the visit to the end, and that was—*reverence!*'"

The following is from Robinson's *Diary*:—

"*September 15th, 1833.*—Rydal Mount.—Had a discussion with W. on his favourite theme, the necessity of an establishment of the church, and the reasonableness that the minority should contribute to its support, a doctrine I accede to, while I assert the monstrous injustice of maintaining the English Church in Ireland against the will of the people.

Monday 16th, 1833.—I had but little conversation with Miss W., and none, hardly, with W. The *fit* was on him."

In the autumn of 1833, Wordsworth made his fifth (and last) tour in Scotland, accompanied this time by his son John and Crabb Robinson. They went by Keswick and Cocker-mouth to Whitehaven, and sailed first to the Isle of Man,—where some days were spent, and several sonnets written,—thence by steamer to Greenock, and thence to Oban, Staffa, and Iona; back by Loch Awe, Inveraray, and Loch Goil; thence through Renfrewshire, Argyllshire, and Dumfriesshire to Carlisle and Westmorland. About ten days after their

* If this judgment be correct, and Byron's criticism of his contemporaries was determined by the fact of whether they had appreciated him or not, his 'attack' may now be estimated at its true value.

return to Rydal, Wordsworth was called back to Carlisle on business in connection with the stamp office. He took Mrs. Wordsworth with him, and they returned by the banks of the Eden, going up to Corby and Nunnery; and afterwards visiting the Druidical Circle, near Penrith, called 'Long Meg and her daughters,' Lowther Castle, and Ullswater, and so back over Kirkstone to Rydal. A series of forty-eight poems of varying merit commemorates the incidents in this tour. Before he started, while living at the Moresby rectory with his son—who had been transferred to the living of Brigham, near Keswick, and was there building a parsonage for himself—he composed some of his *Evening Voluntaries*; and, in a letter to Robinson, dated May 1833, before he came north to join him in the Scotch tour, there is a significant fragment addressed *to the Utilitarians*, which, however, he never published, in the course of which he bewails the

iron age,
When Fact, with heartless search explored,
Shall be Imagination's lord.

These autumn rambles gave a new accession of strength to the poet. So well was he on his return from Scotland, that he could spend hours in rowing a party of friends on Rydal Mere, as Mr. Aubrey de Vere tells us in a letter to Rowan Hamilton.

“ November 1, 1833.

. . . Did I tell you that our party in the north had an interview with Southey, and saw a great deal of Wordsworth? The latter rowed them about on the lake till ten o'clock at night, and had them several times at his house. Nothing can exceed their enthusiasm about him. He has nearly a volume of poems ready, many of which he read aloud to them, while his daughter's tears were falling like a 'May-shower' down her face. My father particularly admired the tremendous political denunciation, and the way in which the poet,—as Brougham said of Lord Eldon,—‘vaticinated in hollow tones.’

The general favourite, however, was an ode *On the Power of Sound*, which they describe as being as mystical, and nearly as sublime, as the *Intimations of Immortality*. He promises to publish all these as soon as he has finished his volume. Is not this glorious news? On the whole he seems to have lost nothing in power, and gained in concentration and refinement; but alas! I hear from every one that he is growing blind. . . .”

The years 1833 to 1836 were not poetically productive. Life flowed on somewhat monotonously in Rydal Mount, and the two elegies on Lamb and Hogg are perhaps the most characteristic poems of these three years. Correspondence with the few old friends who survived, such as Charles Lamb and Alexander Dyce,—and with later ones, such as Rowan Hamilton of Dublin, also went on as usual.

To Alexander Dyce he wrote in 1833 :—

“ You propose to give specimens of the best *sonnet-writers* in our language. May I ask if by this be meant a selection of the *best sonnets*, *best* both as to *kind* and *degree*? A sonnet may be excellent in its kind, but that kind of very inferior interest to one of a higher order, though not perhaps in every minute particular quite so well executed, and from the pen of a writer of inferior genius. It should seem that the best rule to follow would be, first to pitch upon the sonnets which are best *both* in kind and perfectness of execution, and, next, those which, although of a humbler quality, are admirable for the finish and happiness of the execution; taking care to exclude all those which have not one or other of these recommendations, however striking they might be as characteristic of the age in which the author lived, or some peculiarity of his manner. The tenth sonnet of Donne, beginning ‘Death, be not proud,’ is so eminently characteristic of his manner, and at the same time so weighty in the thought, and vigorous in the expression,

that I would entreat you to insert it, though to modern taste it may be repulsive, quaint, and laboured. There are two sonnets of Russell, which, in all probability, you may have noticed, 'Could, then, the babes,' and the one upon Philoctetes, the last six lines of which are first-rate. Southey's 'Sonnet to Winter' pleases me much; but, above all, among modern writers, that of Sir Egerton Brydges, upon 'Echo and Silence.' Miss Williams's 'Sonnet upon Twilight' is pleasing; that upon 'Hope' of great merit.

Do you mean to have a short preface upon the construction of the sonnet? Though I have written so many, I have scarcely made up my own mind upon the subject. It should seem that the sonnet, like every other legitimate composition, ought to have a beginning, a middle, and an end; in other words, to consist of three parts, like the three propositions of a syllogism, if such an illustration may be used. But the frame of metre adopted by the Italians does not accord with this view; and, as adhered to by them, it seems to be, if not arbitrary, best fitted to a division of the sense into two parts, of eight and six lines each. Milton, however, has not submitted to this; in the better half of his sonnets the sense does not close with the rhyme at the eighth line, but overflows into the second portion of the metre. Now, it has struck me, that this is not done merely to gratify the ear by variety and freedom of sound, but also to aid in giving that pervading sense of intense unity in which the excellence of the sonnet has always seemed to me mainly to consist. Instead of looking at this composition as a piece of architecture, making a whole out of three parts, I have been much in the habit of preferring the image of an orbicular body,—a sphere or a dew-drop. All this will appear to you a little fanciful; and I am well aware that a sonnet will often be found excellent, where the beginning, the middle, and the end are distinctly marked, and also where it is distinctly separated into *two* parts, to which, as I before observed, the strict Italian model, as they write it, is favourable. Of

this last construction of sonnet, Russell's upon Philoctetes is a fine specimen ; the first eight lines give the hardship of the case, the six last the consolation, or the *per-contra*.—Ever faithfully, your much obliged friend and servant,

W. WORDSWORTH.

P. S. In the case of the Cumberland poet, I overlooked a most pathetic circumstance. While he was lying under the tree, and his friends were saving what they could from the flames, he desired them to bring out the box that contained his papers, if possible. A person went back for it, but the bottom dropped out, and the papers fell into the flames and were consumed. Immediately upon hearing this, the poor old man expired."

To the same friend, in December 1833, he said: "It is a remarkable thing that the two best ballads, perhaps, of modern times, viz. *Auld Robin Gray*, and the *Lament for the Defeat of the Scots at Flodden-field*, are both from the pens of females."

In connection with this subject of the sonnet, part of a letter written about the same time by Wordsworth to the author of *Philip Van Artevelde* may be quoted:—

"MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR,—You and Mr. Lockhart have been very kind in taking so much trouble about the Sonnets. I have altered them as well as I could to meet your wishes, and trust that you will find them improved, as I am sure they are where I have adopted your own words.

As to double rhymes, I quite agree with Mr. L. that in the case disapproved by him their effect is weak, and I believe will generally prove so in a couplet at the close of a sonnet. But having written so many, I do not scruple, but rather like to employ them occasionally, though I have done it much less in proportion than my great masters, especially Milton, who has two out of his eighteen with double rhymes. I am sure it

will be a great advantage to these pieces to be presented to the public with your comments in the *Quarterly Review*, as you propose;—but I must return to your suggestions. Where I have a large number of sonnets in series, I have not been unwilling to start sometimes with a logical connection of a ‘Yet’ or a ‘But.’ Here, however, as the series is not long, I wished that each sonnet should stand independent of such formal tie. . . .”

There is no doubt that Wordsworth occasionally praised inferior poems, and was blind to the excellence of those possessing more than average merit. He admired the verses of Sir W. Rowan Hamilton, of John Scott (Éditeur of *The Champion*), of Robert Gillies, and Sir W. Gomm, and found in them evidence of the truth of his own line in *The Excursion* about “the poets that are sown by Nature.” It would be quite superfluous, however, to give any detailed examples of this misjudgment of contemporaries. It is perhaps an inevitable, as it certainly seems a universal tendency.

During the years now under review, Wordsworth’s circle of old friends and co-mates in literature narrowed rapidly. Scott died in September 1832, Coleridge in July 1834, Lamb in December 1834, and Hogg in November 1835. His elegies on Scott, Lamb, and Hogg are familiar to every reader of his poems. Many of his intimate friends, unknown to fame, such as Fleming, Rodd, and others, had also departed.

I believe Wordsworth felt that he could not write an elegy on Coleridge. The tie between them was too close, the pain and the joy of it alike overwhelming. Coleridge was his earliest and closest friend, and his most illustrious contemporary in English literature.

Every moral power of Coleridge
Is frozen at its marvellous source :

The rapt one of the godlike forehead,
The heaven-eyed creature sleeps in earth,

was all he could venture to say of him in verse, a year and a half after he was dead. But immediately on hearing of the event, on the 29th July 1834, he wrote thus to Henry Nelson Coleridge :—

“ It is nearly forty years since I first became acquainted with him whom we have just lost ; and though, with the exception of six weeks when we were on the Continent together along with my daughter, I have seen little of him for the last twenty years, his mind has been habitually present with me, with an accompanying feeling that he was still in the flesh. That frail tie is broken, and most of those who are nearest and dearest to me must prepare and endeavour to follow him.”

The following letter from the Rev. R. Perceval Graves (then at Windermere, and now in Dublin) addressed to Wordsworth's nephew and biographer, refers both to Coleridge and to Wordsworth :—

“ It was the Sunday evening after the event * occurred that my brother and I walked over to the Mount, where we found the poet alone. One of the first things we heard from him was the death of one who had been, he said, his friend for more than thirty years. He then continued to speak of him ; called him the most *wonderful* man that he had ever known—wonderful for the originality of his mind, and the power he possessed of throwing out in profusion grand central truths from which might be evolved the most comprehensive systems. Wordsworth, as a poet, regretted that German metaphysics had so much captivated the taste of Coleridge, for he was frequently not intelligible on the subject ; whereas, if his energy and his originality had been more exerted in the channel of poetry, an instrument of which he had so perfect a mastery, Wordsworth thought he might have done more permanently to enrich the literature and to influence the thought of the nation, than any man of the

* The death of Coleridge.

age. As it was, however, he said he believed Coleridge's mind to have been a widely fertilising one, and that the seed he had so lavishly sown in his conversational discourses, and the Sibylline leaves (not the poems so called by him) which he had scattered abroad so extensively covered with his annotations, had done much to form the opinions of the best-educated men of the day ; although this might be an influence not likely to meet with adequate recognition. After mentioning, in answer to our inquiries about the circumstances of their friendship, that though a considerable period had elapsed during which they had not seen much of each other, Coleridge and he had been, for more than two years, uninterruptedly, in as close intimacy as man could be with man, he proceeded to read to us the letter from Henry Nelson Coleridge which conveyed the tidings of his great relation's death, and of the manner of it. It appeared that his death was a relief from intense pain, which, however, subsided at the interval of a few days before the event ; and that shortly after this cessation of agony he fell into a comatose state. The most interesting part of the letter was the statement, that the last use he made of his faculties was to call his children, and other relatives and friends around him, to give them his blessing, and to express his hope to them that the manner of his end might manifest the depth of his trust in his Saviour. As I heard this, I was at once deeply glad at the substance, and deeply affected by Wordsworth's emotion in reading it. When he came to this part his voice at first faltered, and then broke. Before I quit this subject, I will tell you what I was interested in hearing from a person of the highest abilities, whom I had the good fortune of meeting at Rydal Mount. He said that he had visited Coleridge about a month before his death, and had perceived at once his countenance pervaded by a most remarkable serenity. On being congratulated on his appearance, Coleridge replied that what he felt most thankful for was the deep calm

peace of mind which he then enjoyed ; a peace such as he had never before experienced, or scarcely hoped for. This, he said, seemed now settled upon him ; and all things were thus looked at by him through an atmosphere by which all were reconciled and harmonised."

As the years went on, the younger members of the households at Rydal Mount and Greta Hall carried on a constant correspondence on behalf of their seniors, who, at the beginning of the century, had stood on such familiar terms. Dora Wordsworth and Edith Southey were now the letter-writers ; and they kept up the intimacy begun by their parents in former years.

Southey told his friend May, that the death of Miss Hutchinson at Rydal Mount had drawn Dora Wordsworth much nearer to his daughter, "who was almost equally dear to the dead."

The sadness, which now overspread both households, was scarcely broken by events in themselves joyous. Edith Southey's marriage to Mr. Warter, in January 1834, was an event of mingled joy and sorrow to the Rydal family. Dora went over to Keswick to spend a few last days with Edith, and to be one of her bridesmaids ; and after the wedding, we have a touching account of Wordsworth and his wife going down to the foot of the Rydal Mount hill, and pacing backwards and forwards for some time, waiting to see the bride and bridegroom as they passed, to shake hands with them, and give them a blessing.

An extremely interesting account of an interview with Wordsworth in 1833 is given by an American, the Rev. Orville Dewey, in a book recording his travels in Europe, which he called *The Old World and the New*. It gives us a better insight than anything else that has been written, except his own letters, into Wordsworth's opinion of the social and the political state of the country, and of the rocks which he fancied he saw ahead

in the immediate future. His fears may have been exaggerated and unwise. It is enough for us, meanwhile, to note that they were his. Mr. Dewey writes :—

“ I was so much disappointed in the appearance of Mr. Wordsworth, that I actually began to suspect that I had come to the cottage of one of his neighbours. After ten minutes’ commonplace talk about the weather, the travelling, etc., had passed, I determined to find out whether I was mistaken ; and, aware of his deep interest in the politics of England, I availed myself of some remark that was made to introduce that subject. He immediately left all commonplace, and went into the subject with a flow, a flood almost, of conversation, that soon left me in no doubt. After this had gone on an hour or two, wishing to change the theme, I took occasion of a pause to observe that, in this great political agitation, poetry seemed to have died out entirely. He said it had ; but that was not the only cause ; for there had been, as he thought, some years ago, an over-production and a surfeit.

Mr. Wordsworth converses with great earnestness, and has a habit, as he walks and talks, of stopping every fourth or fifth step, and turning round to you to enforce what he is saying. The subjects, the first evening I passed with him, were, as I have said, politics and poetry. He remarked afterwards, that, although he was known to the world only as a poet, he had given twelve hours’ thought to the condition and prospects of society for one to poetry. I replied that there appeared to me to be no contradiction in this, since the spirit of poetry is the spirit of humanity—since sympathy with humanity, and with all its fortunes, is an essential characteristic of poetry—and politics is one of the grandest forms under which the welfare of the human race presents itself.

In politics, Mr. Wordsworth professes to be a reformer, but upon the most deliberate plan and gradual scale ; and he

indulges in the most indignant and yet argumentative diatribes against the present course of things in England, and in the saddest forebodings of what is to come. The tide is beating now against aristocracy and an established religion, and, if it prevails, anarchy and irreligion must follow. He will see no other result. He has no confidence in the people; they are not fit to govern themselves—not yet certainly. Public opinion, the foolish opinion of the depraved, ignorant, and conceited mass, ought not to be the law; it ought not to be expressed in law; it ought not to be represented in government. The true representative government should represent the *mind* of a country, and that is not found in mass, nor is it to be expressed by universal suffrage. Mr. Wordsworth constantly protested against the example of America as not being in point. He insisted that the state of society, the crowded population, the urgency of want, the tenures of property, in England, made a totally different case from ours. He seemed evidently to admit, though he did not say so in terms, that hereditary rank and an established priesthood are indefensible in the broadest views of human rights and interests; but the argument for them is, that they cannot be removed without opening the door to greater evils—to the unrestrained license of the multitude—to incessant change, disorder, uncertainty; and, finally, to oppression and tyranny. He says the world is running mad with the notion that all its evils are to be relieved by political changes, political remedies, political nostrums—whereas the great evils, sin, bondage, misery, lie deep in the heart, and nothing but virtue and religion can remove them; and upon the value, and preciousness, and indispensableness of religion, indeed, he talked very sagely, earnestly, and devoutly.

The next evening, I went to tea to Mr. Wordsworth's, on a hospitable invitation to come to breakfast, dinner, or tea, as I liked. The conversation very soon again ran upon politics. He thought there could be no independence in legislators, who

were dependent for their places upon the ever-wavering breath of popular opinion, and he wanted my opinion about the fact in our country. I replied that, as a secluded man, and accustomed to look at the *morale* of these matters, I certainly had felt that there was likely to be, and probably was, a great want of independence—that I had often expressed the apprehension that our distinguished men were almost necessarily acting under biasses that did not permit them to sit down in their closets and examine great political questions and measures in a fair and philosophical spirit. ‘Then,’ he said, ‘how can there be any safety?’ I answered, as I had frequently said before, that our only safety lay in making the people wise: but I added that our practical politicians were accustomed to say that there was a principle of safety in our conflicts, in the necessarily conflicting opinions of the mass—that they neutralised and balanced each other. I admitted, however, that there was danger; that all popular institutions involved danger; that freedom was a trust, and a perilous trust. Still I insisted that this was only an instance of a general principle; that all probation was perilous; that the greatest opportunity was always the greatest peril. I maintained, also, that, think as we might of political liberty, there was no helping it; that, in the civilised world, the course of opinion was irresistibly setting towards universal education and popular forms of government; and nothing was to be done but to direct, modify, and control the tendency. He fully admitted this; said that, in other centuries, some glorious results might be brought out, but that he saw nothing but darkness, disorder, and misery in the immediate prospect, and that all he could do was to cast himself on Providence. I ventured to suggest that it seemed to me that all good and wise men had a work to do. I said that I admitted, friend to popular institutions as I was, that the world was full of errors about liberty; that there was a mistake and madness about popular freedom, as if it were the grand panacea

for all human ills, and that powerful pens were needed to guide the public mind; and that the pen of genius could scarcely be more nobly employed. But he has no confidence in the body of the people, in their willingness to read what is wholesome, or to do what is right; and this, I took the liberty to say, seemed to me the radical point on which he and I differed. I told him that there were large communities in America in whom I did confide, and that I believed other communities might be raised up to the same condition; and that it appeared to me that it should be the grand effort of the world now, to raise up this mass to knowledge, to comfort, and virtue—since the mass was evidently ere long to rule for us.

After this conversation, Mr. Wordsworth proposed a walk to Grasmere Lake, to see it after sunset; and in that loveliest of all the scenes I ever witnessed on earth were lost all thoughts but of religion and poetry. I could not help saying, with fervent sincerity, ‘I thank you, sir, for bringing me here at this hour’; for he had evidently taken some pains, pushing aside some little interferences with his purpose, to accomplish it. He said, in reply, that so impressive was the scene to him, that he felt almost as if it were a sin not to come here every fair evening. We sat by the shore half an hour, and talked of themes far removed from the strife of politics. The village on the opposite side lay in deep shadow; from which the tower of the church rose like heaven’s sentinel on the gates of evening. A single taper shot its solitary ray across the waters. The little lake lay hushed in deep and solemn repose. Not a sound was heard upon its shore. The fading light trembled upon the bosom of the waters, which were here slightly ruffled, and there lay, as a mirror, to reflect the serenity of heaven. The dark mountains lay beyond, with every varying shade that varying distance could give them. The furthest ridges were sowed with light, as if it were resolved into separate particles and showered down into the darkness below, to make it visible.

The mountain-side had a softness of shadowing upon it, such as I never saw before, and such as no painting I ever saw approached in the remotest degree. It seemed, Mr. Wordsworth said, as if it were '*clothed* with the air.' Above all, was the clear sky, looking almost cold, it looked so pure, along the horizon—but, warmed in the region a little higher, with the vermilion tint of the softest sunset. I am persuaded that the world might be travelled over without the sight of one such spectacle as this—and all owing to the circumstances, the time, the hour. It was perhaps not the least of those circumstances influencing the scene, that it was an hour, passed in one of his holy retreats, with Wordsworth!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CORRESPONDENCE—RECORDS OF CONVERSATION—1835-1836.

THE Library at Rydal Mount—though never so large as the libraries of most literary men—was, by the accumulations and gifts of many years, now a very interesting and valuable one. In the *Transactions of the Wordsworth Society*, vol. vi. pp. 195-257, the Sale Catalogue of that portion of the library which was disposed of in July 1859—amounting to nearly 3000 volumes—will be found. It contained some books of rare interest, which are now in the possession of Lord Coleridge, and others. But the most valuable part of the poet's library still exists at The Stepping Stones, Ambleside. The household at Rydal Mount were extremely liberal in lending books to all their neighbours and friends; and there is now in the possession of Mr. Dykes Campbell, London, a MS. *Library Book* which was kept at the Mount, in which all the books lent out, and the names of the borrowers, were regularly entered. This was probably disposed of at the same auction sale at which many interesting relics of the poet were scattered. Amongst the borrowers occur the names of Hartley Coleridge, De Quincey, H. C. Robinson, Serjeant Talfourd, Mrs. S. T. Coleridge, the Cookson family, Mrs. and Miss Quillinan, Mr. Aubrey de Vere, Miss Southey, Mrs. Davy, Mrs. Fletcher, Lady Richardson, Miss Fenwick, and the families at Fox How and Fox Ghyll. Matthew Arnold's name is entered as having borrowed *Sir Charles Grandison* in 1834-5.

Amongst the books taken out by the borrowers are Tenny-

son's *Poems*, Miss Barrett's *Prometheus*, her *Seraphim*, Shelley's *Letters*, *Modern Painters*, Lamb's *Letters*. The entries range from 1824 onwards. They were apparently taken down at first with some care and regularity, and the dates of the returns of the books are at times mentioned ; but, as I suspect occurs in the majority of such 'Library Books,' it was by degrees less accurately kept ; and the MS. is full of blots, erasures, and even other miscellaneous entries, such as the addresses of friends in London and elsewhere.

Still fearing a Revolution at hand, Wordsworth wrote to Mr. Moxon, while visiting at Lowther Castle in January 1835 :—

"The Radicals and foolish Whigs are driving the nation rapidly to that point, and soon, alas ! it is likely to be found that power will pass from the audacious and wicked to the more audacious and wicked, and so to the still more and more, till military despotism comes in as a quietus. And then, after a time, the struggle for liberty will re-commence ; and you, young as you are, should your life be prolonged to the seventy years of the psalmist, will not live to see her cause crowned with success."

In January 1835, he wrote to Lord Lonsdale offering to "give up the office of Stamp Distributor, which he had held for nearly 22 years, if his son could be appointed to it in his place. He wrote on the same subject again ; and, referring to the Duke of Wellington's objection to appoint sons as successors to their fathers, referred to himself as having "some claim upon his country " as one who had "devoted his life to the service of sound Literature," which, the law of copyright stepping in, declares that "the greater parts of my productions shall be public property the moment I cease to breathe."

To his friend Wrangham he wrote, February 2, 1835 :—

‘MY DEAR WRANGHAM, . . . The mind of every thinking man who is attached to the Church of England must at this time be especially turned to reflections upon all points of ecclesiastical polity, government, and management, which may tend to strengthen the Establishment in the affections of the people, and enlarge the sphere of its efficiency. It cannot, then, I feel, be impertinent in me, though a layman, to express upon this occasion my satisfaction, qualified as it is by what has been said above, in finding from this instance that our Diocesan is unwilling to station clergymen in cures with which they are locally connected. Some years ago, when the present Bishop of London, then of Chester, was residing in this neighbourhood, I took the liberty of strenuously recommending to him not to ordain young men to curacies where they had been brought up, or in the midst of their own relatives. I had seen too much of the mischief of this, especially as affecting the functions and characters of ministers born and bred up in the lower classes of society. It has been painful to me to observe the false position, as the French would call it, in which men so placed are. Their habits, their manners, and their talk, their acquaintanceships, their friendships, and, let me say, their domestic affections, naturally and properly draw them one way, while their professional obligations point out another; and, accordingly, if they are sensible of both, they live in a perpetual conflict, and are liable to be taxed with pride and ingratitude, as seeming to neglect their old friends, when they only associate with them with that reserve, and under those restraints, which their sacred profession enjoins. If, on the other hand, they fall into unrestrained familiarity with the associates of their earlier life and boyish days, how injurious to their ministry such intercourse would be must flash upon every man’s mind whose thoughts have turned for a moment to the subject. . . .”

Writing in the same month to James Montgomery, acknowledging a copy of his poems, he said :—

“I cannot conclude without one word of literary advice, which I hope you will deem my advanced age entitles me to give. Do not, my dear Sir, be anxious about any individual’s opinion concerning your writings, however highly you may think of his genius, or rate his judgment. Be a severe critic to yourself; and, depend upon it, no person’s decision upon the merit of your works will bear comparison in point of value with your own. . . . Above all, I would remind you, with a view to tranquillise and steady your mind, that no man takes the trouble of surveying and pondering another’s writings with a hundredth part of the care which an author of sense and genius will have bestowed upon his own. Add to this reflection another, which I press upon you, as it has supported me through life, viz. that Posterity will settle all accounts justly, and that works which deserve to last will last; and if undeserving this fate, the sooner they perish the better.”

Early in 1835, Wordsworth went up to London with his wife. In the *Journal* of Thomas Moore we find an entry referring to this visit to the following effect :—

“*February 20th 1835.*—After some hours’ work, set off westward. . . . Found that Rogers, though engaged out himself, had asked Wordsworth and his wife, who are just arrived in town, to dinner. . . .

My companion, according to his usual fashion, very soliloquacious, but saying much, of course, that was interesting to hear. . . . This led to Wordsworth telling me, what certainly is no small disgrace to the taste of the English public, of the

very limited sale of his works, and the very scanty sum, on the whole, which he had received for them, not more, I think, than about a thousand pounds in all. I dare say I must have made by my writings at least twenty times that sum; but then I have written twenty times as much, such as it is. In giving me an account of the sort of society he has in his neighbourhood in the country, and saying that he rarely went out to dinner, he gave a very intelligible picture of the sort of thing it must be, when he *does* go out. 'The conversation,' he said, 'may be called *catechetical*; for, as they do me the honour to wish to know my opinions on the different subjects, they ask me questions, and I am induced to answer them at great length, till I become quite tired.' And so he does, I'll warrant him: nor is it possible, indeed, to edge in a word, at least in a *tête-à-tête*, till he *does* get tired. I was, however, very well pleased to be a listener.

Spoke of the immense time it took him to write even the shortest copy of verses,—sometimes whole weeks employed in shaping two or three lines, before he can satisfy himself with their structure. Attributed much of this to the unmanageableness of the English as a poetical language; contrasted it with the Italian in this respect, and repeated a stanza of Tasso to show how naturally the words fell into music of themselves. It was one where the double rhymes 'ella,' 'nella,' 'quella' occurred, which he compared with the meagre and harsh English words, 'she,' 'that,' 'this,' etc. etc. Thought, however, that, on the whole, there were advantages in having a rugged language to deal with, as in struggling with words one was led to give birth to and dwell upon thoughts, while, on the contrary, an easy and mellifluous language was apt to tempt, by its felicity, into negligence, and to lead the poet to substitute music for thought. I do not give these as at all *his words*; but rather my deductions from his sayings, than what he actually

1 said. Talked of Coleridge, and praised him, not merely as a poet, but as a man, to a degree which I could not listen to without putting in my protest. . . . Hinted something of this in reply to Wordsworth's praises, and adverted to Southey's opinion of him, as expressed in a letter to Bowles (saying, if I recollect right, that he was 'lamented by few, and regretted by none'), but Wordsworth continued his eulogium. Defended Coleridge's desertion of his family on the grounds of incompatibility, etc., between him and Mrs. Coleridge; said that Southey took a 'rigid view' of the whole matter. . . .

In remarking upon the causes of an author's popularity (with reference to his own failure, as he thought, in that respect), he mentioned, as one of them, the frequent occurrence of quotable passages,—of lines that dwelt in people's memories, and passed into general circulation. . . . On the subject of Coleridge as a writer, Wordsworth gave it as his opinion (strangely, I think) that his prose would live, and deserved to live; while of his poetry he thought by no means so highly. I had mentioned *Genevieve* as a beautiful thing, but to this he objected: there was too much of the sensual in it.* . . ."

Again:—

"28th to 30th March 1835.— . . . The day I met Wordsworth at dinner at Rogers's, the last time I was in town, he asked us all in the evening to write something in a little album of his daughter's, and Wilkie drew a slight sketch in it. One of the things Luttrell wrote was the following epitaph on a man who was run over by an omnibus:—

* *Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence of Thomas Moore*, edited by the Right Hon. Lord John Russell, M.P., vol. vii. 69-73.

Killed by an omnibus—why not ?
 So quick a death a boon is.
 Let not his friends lament his lot,—
Mors omnibus communis.

As an instance of very close translation, he gave me the following of his own, from the well-known Greek epigram, *Χρῦσον ἄνθρωπος εὐρών*, etc. :—

A thief found gold and left a rope, but he who could not find
 The gold he left tied on the rope the thief had left behind.*

An undated letter of Wordsworth to Crabb Robinson, belonging to the year 1835, and evidently written from Rydal Mount, tells of his having been in London, and taken three days to come down to Westmoreland. He speaks of Hampstead, Trentham, Coventry, and Birmingham, and adds :—

“The weather here is very sharp, and to-day we have a blustering wind, tearing off the blossoms and twigs from the trees with almost equal disregard. At breakfast, this morning, we received from some unknown friend the *Examiner*, containing a friendly notice of my late volume. Is it discreditable to say that these things interest me little but as they may tend to promote the sale, which, with the prospects of unavoidable expense before me, is a greater object to me, much greater, than it would otherwise have been? The private testimonies which I receive very frequently of the effect of my writings upon the hearts and minds of men are indeed very gratifying, because I am sure *they* must be written under pure influences; but it is not necessarily, or even probably so, with strictures intended for the public. The one are *effusions*, the other *compositions*, and liable in various degrees to inter-

* *Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence of Thomas Moore*, vol. vii. p. 85.

Compare S. T. Coleridge's translation of the same epigram in *Omniana* (1812), ii. 123 :—

Jack finding gold, left a rope on the ground;
 Will missing his gold, used the rope which he found.

mixtures that take from their value. It is amusing to me to have proofs how critics and authors differ in judgment, both as to fundamentals and incidentals. As an instance of the latter, see the passage where I speak of Horace, quoted in the *Examiner*. The critic marks in italics for approbation certain passages, but he takes no notice of three words, in delicacy of feeling worth, in my estimation, all the rest—‘he only listening.’ Again, what he observes in praise of my mode of dealing with nature as opposed to my treatment of human life—which as he says, is not to be trusted—would be reversed, as it has been by many, who hear that I ran into excess in my pictures of the influence of natural objects, and assign to them an importance which they are not entitled to ; while in my treatment of the intellectual instincts, affections, and passions of mankind, I am nobly distinguished by having drawn out into notice the points in which they resemble each other, in preference to dwelling (as dramatic authors must do) upon those in which they differ. If my writings are to last, it will, I myself believe, be mainly owing to this characteristic. They will please for the single cause, ‘That we have all of us one human heart.’ Farewell.”

On his way north, at Cambridge, he heard of the death of his friend, Richard Sharp,—“Conversation Sharp,” as he was called,—the man of whom Wordsworth used to say that he knew Italy better than any other person he had met with. From the Master’s Lodge at Trinity he wrote to Rogers on this subject :—

“15th April 1835.

MY DEAR ROGERS,—The papers record the death of your, and let me add, my long-known and long-valued friend, Richard Sharp. Sincerely do I condole with you, and with his nearest connections. How a thought of the presence of living

friends brightens particular spots ! and what a shade falls over them when those friends have passed away ! This I have felt strongly in the course of the last twelve months, in respect to London, vast as the place is. And even in regard to the Lakes, it makes me melancholy to think that Sharp will visit them no more. If you be in communication with Mrs. Sharp and Miss Kinnaird, pray assure them that Mrs. W. and I sympathise sincerely with them in their bereavement. . . . — I am, and ever shall be, firmly yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH."

As the spring of 1835 advanced, we hear of the dangerous illness of Miss Hutchinson, who transcribed *The Friend* for Coleridge, at Allan Bank. Anxiety, both as to her, and to his sister, detained Wordsworth in the north during June ; and on the 23d of that month Sarah Hutchinson died.

On the 25th Wordsworth wrote to Southey, telling him of their loss :—

"MY DEAR SOUTHEY,—My letter of yesterday must have prepared you. All was over before seven in the afternoon. She had no acute suffering whatever, and within a very short time of her departure—when Dora asked Mr. Carr if something could not be done to make her easier—she opened her eyes in strength, and with a strong and sweet voice, said, "I am quite, I am perfectly comfortable." Mr. Carr supposes that her debility produced a suffusion on the brain, which was the immediate cause of her death. O, my dear Southey, we have lost a precious friend ; of the strength of her attachment to you and yours, you can but imperfectly judge. It was deep in her heart. I saw her within an hour after her decease, in the silence and peace of death, with as heavenly an expression on her countenance as ever human

creature had. Surely there is food for faith in these appearances; for myself, I can say that I have passed a wakeful night, more in joy than sorrow, with that blessed face before my eyes perpetually, as I lay in bed. We are all much better than our friends could think possible. God Almighty bless you and yours! Your dear girls have had a loss to which time will never make them insensible; but God is good, as they will feel in all their sorrow.—Farewell, ever most faithfully yours,
W. W.”

In writing to his friend John May, in the autumn of this year, Southey referred to Miss Hutchinson, “who was to me like a sister,” and to the shadow that had fallen on Wordsworth’s home: his sister and daughter being both invalids, “so that at this time Wordsworth’s is a more afflicted home than my own. They used to be two of the happiest in the country. But there is a time for all things, and we are supported by God’s mercy.”

Writing from the Observatory, at Dublin, to Aubrey de Vere, on March 26, 1835, Rowan Hamilton said:—

“I think I admire Keats, Shelley, Coleridge, and Wordsworth at least as much now as ever. But Wordsworth, more than any of the other three, requires a little previous *tuning* of the reader’s mind, to be enjoyed and appreciated aright. After a longer interval than usual, I took up a volume of his works the other day, in a very lazy humour, and in a spirit of merely passing the time, in which one ought not to approach high poetry. I lit upon the first of the *Poems founded on the Affections*. I wish Wordsworth would let us find out for ourselves what his poems are founded upon; and so wished his daughter, in a conversation on that subject at Rydal Mount last September, and put him in a rage by hinting that her father was

sometimes at a loss whether to refer her to the *Poems of the Imagination* or *Poems of the Fancy* for some particular passage. . . .”

To this letter Aubrey de Vere replied :—

“ April 4, 1835.

. . . I agree with you entirely in your strictures on Wordsworth's arrangement of his poems. Independent of its uselessness, it seems like a parade of system ; and I cannot help thinking that, in it he mistakes Classification for Method, to a degree hardly excusable in a reader of *The Friend*. I wish, however, he would let us have his new volume on any condition, even though he should arrange the poems contained in it alphabetically ! Have you yet perused the poems of Coleridge first published in the last edition ? . . . His poems seem to me as if they were the products of the Pure Reason, Love, and Will. Now it is quite otherwise with Wordsworth. The charities of life have with him a distinct and profound worth in themselves ; and the understanding finds a large though subordinate place in the construction of each poem. He generalises and abstracts his thoughts, and then arranges them in due order. You see at once the dependence of each part, and what goes before, and comes after ; you have no difficulty in following the association of his ideas. Wordsworth always looks before and after, and the consequence is that each of his poems has a certain kind of unity and wholeness : not of course to the same degree as a poem of Keats and Sophocles, or of the same kind ; but still a kind of its own, a unity which you discover on reflection ; a wholeness which you *meditate*, as you *contemplate* that of Classical Art. In a word, as a poem of Keats or Milton is a plastic whole, so a poem of Wordsworth or Shakespeare is an organic whole. It germinates, branches, and blossoms, like a tree ; and then stands before you, with the sort of completeness a tree pos-

sesses, not an All *to* One, but an All *from* One, and a One in All. Now in no poem of Coleridge will one find either the one, or the other kind of completeness. There is not only no mechanism in it, but no apparent organisation ; his thoughts flow out of one another, rather than grow out of one another, following some law or association which we cannot analyse though we spontaneously reply to it. Nay, we cannot suppose the process to have passed above the plane of consciousness in Coleridge himself. It is this entire absence of space, time, cause and effect, theory, etc., which seems to distinguish Coleridge from all other poets, even those that seem most to resemble him."

On September 10th of the same year, Aubrey de Vere wrote from Curragh Chase to Rowan Hamilton :—

"... How do you like Wordsworth's new volume ? It seems to me that the instrument has attained a greater perfection of sweetness, and mellowness, from age ; and that too, without losing anything of its compass. I confess that *at first* I thought it rather less powerful than of old : but this defect is only imaginary—an illusion which proceeds from that very perfection of harmony which I have alluded to."

During the summer of 1835, Wordsworth occupied himself in getting his *Guide to the Lakes* reprinted at Kendal, with additions. Shortly after this he seems to have gone into Herefordshire, and to have spent some time at Brinsop Court, with the Hutchinsons. Returning to Rydal, after thirteen weeks' absence, he wrote to Mr. Moxon, in reply to a request that he would send him some of Lamb's letters for publication :—

"Rydal Mount, November 20, 1835.

MY DEAR SIR,—In a few days I hope to have an opportunity of sending such a selection of Lamb's letters, to myself and my family, as appear to me not unfit for immediate publica-

tion. There are, however, in them some parts which had better be kept back. . . . I have also thought proper to suppress every word of criticism upon my own poems. . . . The suppressed letters shall not be destroyed. Those relating to my works are withheld, partly because I shrink from the thought of assisting in any way to spread my own praises, and still more as being convinced that the opinions or judgments of friends given in this way are of little value. . . .

On the other page you have the requested epitaph. It was composed yesterday; and, by sending it immediately, I have prepared the way, I believe, for a speedy repentance, as I do not know that I ever wrote so many lines without some retrenchment being afterwards necessary. If these verses should be wholly unsuitable for the end Miss L. had in view, I shall find no difficulty in reconciling myself to the thought of their not being made use of, though it would have given me great, very great, pleasure to fulfil her wishes in all points.

The first objection that will strike you, and every one, is its extreme length, especially compared with epitaphs as they are now written; but this objection might in part be obviated by engraving the lines in double column, and not in capitals.

Chiabrera has been my model—though I am aware that Italian churches,—both on account of their size, and the climate of Italy,—are more favourable to long inscriptions than ours—his epitaphs are characteristic and circumstantial. So have I endeavoured to make this of mine; but I have not ventured to touch upon the most striking feature of our departed friend's character, and the most affecting circumstance of his life, namely, his faithful and intense love of his sister. Had I been framing an Elogy or Monody this would and must have been done; but for seeing and feeling the sanctity of that relation as it ought to be seen and felt, lights are required which could scarcely be furnished by an epitaph, unless it were to touch on little or nothing else. The omission, therefore, in my

view of the case, was unavoidable, and I regret it the less,—you yourself having already treated the subject in verse, with genuine tenderness and beauty. . . .

I cannot conclude without adding that the epitaph, if used at all, can only be placed in the church. It is much too long for an out-door stone, among our rains, damps, etc. . . .
—Kindest regards, W. W.

After an absence of thirteen weeks, I only returned home last Wednesday.”

Shortly afterwards, he wrote again to Mr. Moxon:—

“I have sent you the epitaph again revised. Yesterday I sent a few alterations.

I hope the changes will be approved of. At all events, they better answer my purpose. The lines, as they now stand, preserve better the balance of delicate delineation, the weaknesses are not so prominent, and the virtues placed in a stronger light; and I hope nothing is said that is not characteristic.—affectly. yours, W. W.

If the length makes the above utterly unsuitable, it may be printed with his Works as an effusion by the side of his grave; in this case, in some favourable moment, I might be able to add a few lines upon the friendship of the brother and sister.”

Writing again to Moxon, on the 4th of January 1836, about this inscription to Lamb, Wordsworth added—

“ . . . At Mr. Southey’s, two days ago, I had a peep at the two volumes about Coleridge.* The editor is a man without judgment, and therefore appears to be without feeling. His rule is to publish all the truth that he can scrape together about his departed friend, not perceiving the difference between the real truth and what appears to him to be true. The maxim *de mortuis nil nisi verum* was never meant to imply

* Evidently *Table-Talk of S. T. Coleridge*. London, 1835.

that all truth is to be told, only nothing but what is true. The distinction also has escaped his sagacity, and ever will escape those of far superior talent to his, who care not what offence or pain they give to living persons, provided they have come to a conclusion, however inconsiderately, that they are doing justice to the dead. . . . —With kind regards, yours, W. W.”

At Christmas 1835, Henry Crabb Robinson went down to Westmoreland to be near the Wordsworths. He lived for five weeks in the house of a Mrs. Atkins,—a cottage at the foot of Rydal Hill,—but spent most of his time with his friends, and kept a record of his visit as usual. The following are extracts from his Diary :—

“ *Dec. 26.*—I spent this morning in looking over three of Charles Lamb’s letters which Wordsworth did not choose to send to Talfourd. There are several most delightful letters, which we regret not to be able to print immediately.

Sunday 27.— . . . Wordsworth is somewhat less intolerant than he used to be ; and we have had very little sparring yet in politics.

Jan. 3d, 1836.—In the evening W. read his verses on Charles Lamb, supplemental to the epitaph. I fear, though written with utmost delicacy, that they cannot be printed in Miss L.’s lifetime.

5th.—I have had much talk with Wordsworth on this sad question (the Irish Tithe Bill). He says, with the solemn earnestness of a Hebrew prophet, that he would die a thousand deaths rather than consent to the appropriation clause in the Irish Tithe Bill. I dined with W. at Dr. Arnold’s ; an agreeable afternoon, though the main subject of conversation was one in which I have no pleasure—in hearing W. talk of Goethe, whom he depreciates in utter ignorance.

7th.—I walked partly, and partly drove, with W. to Elleray, the residence of Lady Farquhar and Mr. Hamilton, the property of Professor Wilson. In our walk, W. was remarkably eloquent and felicitous in his praise of Milton. He spoke of the *Paradise Regained* as surpassing even the *Paradise Lost*, in perfection of execution, though the theme is far below it, and demanding less power. He spoke of the description of the storm in it, as the finest of all poetry, and he pointed out some of the artifices of versification by which Milton had made so great an effect, as in passages like this—

Pining atrophy
Marasmus, and wide wasting pestilence
Dropsies, and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums—

in which the power of the final *rheums* is heightened by the atrophy and pestilence. But, said he, I would not print this, and similar observations, for it would enable admiring verse-makers to imitate the practice. And what genius discovered, mere mechanics would copy. Hence, I said, I hold critical writings of very little use. They do rather harm. W. also praised, but not equally, the *Samson Agonistes*. He concurred, he said, with Johnson in this, that this drama had *no middle*, but the beginning and the end are equally sublime.

26.—Reading Housmann's collection of sonnets (from Shakespeare to the present day), and containing more than fifty from Wordsworth. He puts W. above all others. By the by, I wish I could here write down all W. has said about the sonnet lately. He read here the first fourteen lines of *Paradise Lost*, which he says are a perfect sonnet without rhyme. . . . W. does not approve of closing the verse with a full stop, and of giving a turn to the thought in the tercines. This is the Italian mode. Milton lets the thought *run over*. He has used both forms indifferently. I prefer the Italian form. W. does not approve of closing the sonnet with a couplet,

and he holds it to be absolutely a vice to have a sharp turning at the end, with an epigrammatic finish. He does not therefore quite approve of the termination of Cowper's sonnet to Romney :—

Nor could'st thou sorrow see
While I was Hayley's guest, and sat to thee.

These lines in Milton are essentially a sonnet, a unity of thought.

Jan. 29.—W. speaks highly of the author of *Corn Law Rhymes*. He says none of us are better than he is at his best, though there is a great deal of stuff, arising from his hatred of subsisting things. Like Byron, Shelley, etc., he looks on all things with an evil eye. This arises naturally enough in the mind of a very poor man, who thinks the world has not treated him well. But W. says, though a very poor man, he has had the means of sending his son to college, who did not succeed there. Hence perhaps his hatred of Universities. He has laboured intensely ; and, like the Glastonbury thorn, has flowered in winter. His latter writings are the best. W. says *The Ranter* contains some fine passages. E. has a fine eye for nature. He is a very extraordinary man.

31.—I have not noticed as I ought W.'s answer to the charge brought by Wilson against him, that he never quotes other poems than his own. In fact I can testify to the falsehood of the statement. But W. in addition remarked, ' You know how I love and quote not only Shakespeare and Milton, but Cowper, Burns, etc. As to the modern poets, Byron, Scott, etc., I do not quote them, because I do not love them. B. has great power and genius, but there is [in his poems] something so repugnant to my moral sense, that I abhor them. Besides, even as works of mere taste, there is this

material circumstance, they came too late. My taste was formed, for I was forty-five when they appeared : and we cannot, after that age, love new things. New impressions are difficult to make. Had I been young, I could have enjoyed most of them, I have no doubt.

Feby. 1st.—From all my friends I took leave, with feelings of great tenderness. My esteem for them has been greatly raised during this last most agreeable visit. For though the knowledge that Miss W. was suffering near us, and that Miss Dora was far from well, was painful to the healthful members of the family, yet this was become habitual to them ; and the natural elasticity of the spirits happily enables persons—even persons of strong sensibility like Wordsworth—to resist the effect of such impressions, and enjoy what is left of pleasureable emotions.

Before I quit Rydal I will add a note or two on W.'s conversation. Talking of dear C. L.'s very strange habit of quizzing, and of Coleridge's far more equivocal *inconsistencies* in talk, W. said he thought much of this was owing to a *school habit*. Lamb's veracity was unquestionable in all matters of a serious kind. He never uttered an untruth, either for profit, or through vanity, and certainly never to injure others. Yet he loved a quizzing lie, a fiction that amused him like a good joke, or an exercise of wit. There was in C. a sort of dreaminess, which would not let him see things as they were. He would talk about his own feelings, and recollections, and intentions, in a way that deceived others ; but he was finally deceived himself. 'I am sure,' said W., 'that he never formed a plan or knew what was to be the end of *Christabel* ; and that he merely deceived himself when he thought, as he says, that he had the idea quite clear in his mind. But I believe that at his school the boys had a habit very unfavourable to the practice of truth. . . .'

Mrs. Arnold of Fox How, writing to her friend Mrs. Fletcher, thus describes one of the evenings referred to by Robinson :—

“ *Fox How, Jan. 10, 1836.*—You would, I am sure, have liked to join our fireside yesterday evening, when Mr. Wordsworth and his friend Mr. Robinson were with us, the former in one of his happiest moods, and conversing open-heartedly, if I may use the word, on subjects which he most loves and understands. It is very pleasant to see him with Mr. Robinson, who does not the least mind contradicting him, and is himself so good-humoured that Mr. W. takes it all well from him ; and I should really think that this—together with his liking for him, and old acquaintanceship—may allow the liberal opinions he hears from him to make some little impression. Mr. R. is very entertaining, and full of recollections connected with his own varied life, and extensive knowledge of men and things. . . .”

On January 11th, we find Wordsworth writing thus from Rydal to Sir W. Rowan Hamilton :—

“ . . . How should I like, old as I am, to visit those classic shores, and the Holy Land, with all its remembrances, so sweet and solemn ! . . . The Protestant Established Church of Ireland, which I hold precious as my life, seems to cry out to me.”

His interest in local county politics was unabated, and although he did not do any active service to his party in 1836, as he used to do in former years, his pen was not idle. On the 26th March, he sent this squib to Robinson, written, he tells him, immediately on reading Evans's “modest self-defence speech the other day” :—

“ Said red-ribboned Evans :
 ‘ My legions in Spain
 Were at sixes and sevens ;
 Now they ’re famished or slain :

But no fault of mine,
 For, like brave Philip Sidney
 In campaigning I shine,
 A true knight of his kidney.
 Sound flogging and fighting
 No chief, on my troth,
 E'er took such delight in
 As I in them both.
 Fontarabbia can tell
 How my eyes watched the foe,
 Hernani knows well
 That our feet were not slow ;
 Our hospitals, too,
 They are matchless in story ;
 Where her thousands Fate slew,
 All panting for glory.'
 Alas for this Hero !
 His fame touched the skies,
 Then fell below zero,
 Never, never to rise !
 For him to Westminster
 Did Prudence convey,
 There safe as a Spinster
 The Patriot to play.
 But why be so glad on
 His feats or his fall ?
 He's got his red ribbon,
 And laughs at us all."

Mrs. Wordsworth also sent the following to Robinson, in answer to the inquiry if her husband had ever written an epigram :—

"To show you that we *can* write an epigram, we do not say a good one.

ON AN EVENT IN COL. EVANS'S REDOUBTED PERFORMANCES IN SPAIN.

The Ball whizzed by,—it grazed his ear,
 And whispered as it flew,
 'I only touch—not take—don't fear,
 For both, my honest Buccaneer !
 Are to the Pillory due.'

The producer thinks it not amiss, as being murmured between sleep and awake over the fire while thinking of you last night."

In April he interested himself about a scheme for building a new church in his native town of Cockermouth, and wrote thus to his old friend Thomas Poole of Nether Stowey:—

"Rydal Mount, April 19, [1836]."

MY DEAR MR. POOLE,—If I had been a merry-maker instead of a verse-maker . . . I should not have come a-begging to you. . . . As far as concerns the Church of England, Cockermouth, my native place, is in a state of much spiritual destitution: nearly six thousand souls, with only 300 sittings for the poor, of which two-thirds are taken up by the children of two Sunday schools. The place is poor, but increasing. I have been the means of setting on foot the project of erecting a new church there, and the inhabitants look towards me for more, much more, assistance than I can possibly afford them through any influence which I possess. . . . [He therefore asked his friend to see if any of his wealthier acquaintances would help.] The time is not far distant when, unless great exertions are made, the same argument of disproportion between churchmen and non-churchmen, which has been so ruinously applied to the Protestant establishment in Ireland, will be brought to bear against the National Church of England. Heaven forbid they should be successful! A second church is now building at Keswick, one is just built at Kendal, another near Ambleside, and if we can succeed at Cockermouth, where there is a promising opening, we shall excite other towns to follow our example. . . . Your neighbourhood is very dear to me, the more so since poor Coleridge is gone. If my daughter were strong enough to travel, I certainly would visit you before the summer is flown. Farewell.—Ever yours,

W. WORDSWORTH."

Again, on the same subject, to the same correspondent :—

“*Rydal Mount, August 20, 1836.*”

MY DEAR FRIEND,—. . . Thanks for your exertions, and for your contribution. [He asks him to keep the draft, however, ‘till the project takes a more substantial shape.’] The Earl of Egremont is lord of the castle of Cockermouth, and has a large property in the neighbourhood. . . . He thought it better, in which line he is quite mistaken, to enlarge the old church, and increase the endowment. . . . He has just made an offer of two thousand pounds to the inhabitants, to be disposed of for the benefit of the place in any way which they may approve. . . . They have chosen to have a new marketplace. This was wanted, and therefore we can’t complain. . . . I shall shortly go over to Cockermouth, and learn the state of things upon the spot. . . .

Of dear Miss Hutchinson I shall say no more than that her memory is consecrated in our hearts. . . . Ever faithfully yours,
W. WORDSWORTH.”

The following fragment of undated letter to John Kenyon evidently belongs to the same year :—

“To-morrow we are to have a chapel consecrated within less than 3 miles of this place ; there is no situation out of the Alps, nor among them, more beautiful than that where this building is placed. Mrs. W. and I walked thither this afternoon. You know the River Brathay—the Chapel stands upon a rocky knoll above it, and commands a view of the stream to Langdale Pikes, which this afternoon were white with snow, as was also nearly half the mountain-side below them. The meadows were as green as the after-grass could make them, and the woods in the full foliage of many-coloured Autumn. I wish you had been with us, and I am sure you would have subscribed for a peal of bells, that their harmony might be wafted up and down the river.”

Writing to Robinson, in April 1836, Wordsworth expressed

his hope of being in London in three weeks. He asks him to let Longman know of this, to thank Landor for his *Pericles and Aspasia*, and to tell him "to leave the church alone." In a *P.S.* to this letter Dora (or Dorina, as she signed herself, to mark the distinction from her aunt Dorothy) added, "Will you embark for the Continent with W., where travelling won't be too fatiguing?"

In May Wordsworth was in London. Robinson speaks of his being at Rogers' house on the evening of the 16th; and on the 26th May, Wordsworth, Landor, Robinson, and many others attended the first performance of Serjeant Talfourd's tragedy of *Ion* at Covent Garden Theatre,—Macready and Miss Ellen Tree being the chief actors.

The best account of this performance is that given in the gossipy book of John Dix (afterwards Ross), already referred to:—*

"In the next box to Joanna Baillie sat William Wordsworth, and the great poet of course was an object of not a little attention. As soon as he entered the house he was recognised, and loudly cheered. Whether he was ignorant that the compliment was intended for him or not, I cannot tell, but he did not notice it. He leaned over and shook hands with Joanna, and then sat down, removed his green spectacles, and leaning his thoughtful-looking head on his hand, gazed round the house, nodding to one and another as he recognised them. I always thought that Wordsworth's face had much of sadness in its expression, and this struck me very forcibly on the night in question. He looked more like a man borne down by some heavy grief than a profound thinker. His smile, whenever he chanced to greet any acquaintance, was really a solemn affair, and it speedily vanished, as if the effort to display it, if but for a moment, was too painful for long continuance. On my men-

* *Pen and Ink Sketches of Poets, Painters, and Politicians*, pp. 201-3.

the second stanza is new; also a new stanza in *The Three Cottage Girls*. In the fifth volume, two poems from *The Evening Voluntaries*, one of seventy-two lines, the other of fifty; also the *Bird of Paradise* poem, and an *Epitaph from Chiabrera*, and the *Lines to the Memory of Charles Lamb and Hogg*.

The value of this edition, as hereafter will be universally admitted, lies in the pains which have been taken in the revisal of so many of the old poems, in the re-modelling and often re-writing whole paragraphs, which you know has cost me great labour, and I do not repent of it. In the poems lately written I have had comparatively little trouble."

He wrote to Moxon that he was "quite at ease in regard to the reception which writings that have cost me so much labour will in the end meet with. I can truly say that I have not the least anxiety regarding the fate of this edition. The labour I have bestowed in correcting the style of those poems, now revised for the last time according to the best of my judgment, no one can ever estimate. The consequence of this sort of work is that progress bears no proportion to pains, and that hours of labour are often entirely thrown away, ending in a passage being left as I found it. . . ."

Writing to Robinson, January 28th, 1837, he said: "In two or three days I hope the printing of my last volume will be begun; the whole of the verses are corrected for the press. But I must have another tug at the *Postscript* on the Poor Laws, and other things, in which I wish you were to help; Mary wishes it still more.

What do you think of an edition of 20,000 of my Poems being struck off at Boston, as I have been told on good authority? An author in the English Language is becoming a great power for good or evil, if he writes with spirit.

Now for our travels. I trust I shall be ready to start from home by the end of the third week in February."

At the Lancaster Assizes, in September 1836, an important will case, involving the succession to the Hornby Castle estate, turned on the genuineness of certain letters, said to have been written by the testator. To give evidence as to these letters many witnesses were subpœnaed: Southey, Lingard the historian, Dr. Shelton Mackenzie, as well as Wordsworth.* Wordsworth was the only witness sworn. Southey—writing to Henry Taylor, said: “Wordsworth is now a sworn critic, and appraiser of compositions; and he has the whole honour to himself—an honour of which I believe there is no other example in literary history.”

Dr. Shelton Mackenzie wrote down his recollections of his meeting with Wordsworth and Southey on this occasion.

“At our meeting on the preceding evening, Mr. Wordsworth gave his opinion of the letters to this effect, judging from external as well as internal evidence, that though they came from one hand, they did not emanate from one and the same mind; that a man commencing to write letters might do so very badly, but as he advanced in life,—particularly if, like Marsden, he wrote many letters,—he would probably improve in style; such improvement being constant, and not capricious. That is, if he gradually learned to spell, and write properly, he would not fall back at intervals into his original errors of composition and spelling; that if once he had got out of his ignorance, he could not fall back into it, except by design; that the human mind advances, but cannot recede, unless warped by insanity or weakened by disease. The conclusion arrived at, which facts afterwards proved, was, that the inequality in the letters arose from their being composed by different persons, some ignorant and some well-informed, while another person always copied them fairly for the post.

* See *Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey*, vol. vii. pp. 299-302.

This is the sum of what Mr. Wordsworth at great length and very elaborately declared as the result he had arrived at. It was thought piled on thought, clear investigation, careful analysis, and accumulative reasoning.

While Wordsworth was speaking, I noticed that Southey listened with great attention. Once or twice Wordsworth referred to him for his coincidence in an argument, and Southey very laconically assented. Dr. Lingard's opinion was already on record, and my friend and myself very briefly stated ours to be precisely the same as Wordsworth's. The next day Wordsworth was put into the witness-box, was sworn, and his examination had commenced, in fulfilment of Mr. Cresswell's promise to the jury that they should hear the opinion of eminent literary characters as to the compound authorship of Marsden's letters. But Sir F. Pollock, the leader on the other side, objected to such evidence, alleging that they might as well examine a batch of Edinburgh reviewers; and that it was substituting speculative opinion for actual fact, besides taking from the jury the power of judgment founded upon opinion. After a long argument, it was decided that this evidence was inadmissible; but, as the verdict eventually showed, the jury evidently thought that there was good reason why such evidence was set aside.

While a friend went for a magistrate's order for us to see the castle (which is used as the prison), Southey, Wordsworth and myself had a brisk conversation.

From the spot on which we stood (a sort of terrace) there was a fine view of the Irish Sea, the country around Lancaster, and to the north the mountains of Cumberland and Westmoreland; which last were eagerly pointed out by Wordsworth. I hazarded the remark, that an American had compared these mountains with some in the vicinity of his own Hudson River, and this led to a conversation about America. 'I always lamented,' said Southey, 'that Gifford's anti-American feeling

should be so prominent in the *Quarterly* ; but he was obstinate, and the more I remonstrated, the more he persevered.' We spoke of American reprints of English works, and Wordsworth said it was wonderful what an interest they took in our literature ;—' It was the yearning of the child for the parent' ; while Southey remarked, with a smile, ' Rather the yearning of the robber for his booty : they reprint English works because it pays them better than to buy native copyrights ; and until men are paid, and paid well, for writing, depend on it that writing well must be an exception rather than the rule.'

We now went to visit Lancaster Castle, which need not here be described. After enjoying the fine view from the Keep, we went to see the Penitentiary, within the castle. Dr. Lingard had left us before this, and the ball of conversation was kept up between Wordsworth, Southey, and myself. The principal subject was American literature, with which, at that time, I was pretty well acquainted. Wordsworth could scarcely believe that of a three volume work, published here at a guinea and a half, the reprint was usually sold in New York for two shillings—in later days the price has been as low as sixpence, the great sale making a fraction of profit worth looking for. Wordsworth expressed a strong desire to obtain an American reprint of any of Southey's works ; but Mr. Southey appeared quite indifferent. ' I should be glad to see them,' said he, ' if the rogues would only give me a tithe of what the work of my brains may yield to them.'

Returning to the terrace leading to the courts, Wordsworth and Mr. Quillinan went into the town ; while Southey and myself walked up and down for about half an hour. ' I am glad,' said he, ' that they would not take our evidence. It was nothing but matter of opinion, and if twenty men of letters swore one way on one day, twenty more would swear the reverse on the next day, and with equal conscientiousness.' I said that I suspected the *offering* such evidence was enough,

as its rejection made the jury suspect there was a cause for not hearing it. 'Like enough,' said he, laughing heartily, 'that would be a true lawyer's trick !' . . .

We spoke of Wordsworth, and he said, 'A clear half of what he has written will remain. Who can say how much of the rest of us will survive ? Scott, for example,—no one thinks of his poetry now.' I ventured to say that in Scott's case, as in his own, the excellence of their prose had thrown their poetry into the shade. 'That is a flattering apology,' said he, 'but our prose may, from its very quantity, if from no other cause, have crowded down our poetry. One thing I do know ; to write poetry is the best preparation for writing prose.' "

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE ITALIAN TOUR OF 1837.

ON the 11th of March 1837, Wordsworth arrived in town; and, after a short stay at Miss Fenwick's house he left it, on the 19th of the month, with Henry Crabb Robinson, for his fifth and last Continental tour.

The best account of that tour is contained in Robinson's Diary, and in a series of letters written by Wordsworth to his invalid sister at Rydal, and to his wife, who had gone to Brinsop Court, in Herefordshire.*

Robinson writes: "Our tour lasted from Sunday the 19th of March to Monday the 7th of August, and I have preserved short memoranda of it. It included a journey through France, along the Corniche Road to Pisa, by Volterra to Sienna, thence to Rome. After a month there, we returned by the three Tuscan monasteries to Florence. Thence through Parma to Milan, and then moving eastwards by the Lakes of Como, Iseo, and Garda to Venice. We crossed the Alps by the new road, along the valley of Ticino, and that of the Drave through Wiffe, Nillau, etc., to Salzburg. After an excursion to the Austrian Salzkammergut, we proceeded to Munich, Stutgard, and to Heidelberg, and thence through Brussels to Calais.

Paris, 23d March 1837.—I am a bad journalist. I feel unable to record even the interesting remarks W. is con-

* Wordsworth took his wife with him from Rydal by Manchester to Birmingham; whence she proceeded to Brinsop Court, and he by Rugby to London.

tinually making. It is *his* society that will distinguish this from all other journeys, and it is to accommodate him that I have altered my usual mode of travelling. He cannot bear night-travelling, and in his sixty-ninth year needs rest. I therefore at once yielded to his suggestion to buy a carriage for the journey. It is a barouche, and Moxon offered to be our companion. He is, however, to return from Paris to England, when we leave for Italy. . . . W. only heard of Landor's satire from Quillinan in Portugal. He said he regretted Quillinan's indiscretion, and felt much obliged to all his London friends for their never mentioning the circumstance to him. He never saw nor means to see the satire : so that it will fall ineffectual, if it was intended to wound. He had heard that the pamphlet imputed to him a depreciation of Southey's genius, but he felt a warm affection for Southey, and an admiration of his genius. He could never have said that he would not give 5s. for all S. had ever written. He had in consequence written a few lines to Southey. Notwithstanding his sense of the extreme injustice of L. toward him, he willingly acknowledged his sense of Landor's genius. As to the image of the seashell, he acknowledged no obligation to L.'s *Gebir* for it. From his childhood the shell was familiar to him ; and the children of his native place always spoke of the humming sound as indicating the sea, and its greater or less loudness had a reference to the state of the sea at the time. The circumstance, however, gave him little annoyance.

27th.—W. is sleeping in an alcove, and in his sleep has been declaiming some unintelligible verses. He has been chatty to-day. He said Langhorne is one of the poets who has not had justice done him. His *Country Justice* has true feeling and poetry. He praised Béranger, and said all classes love him.

April 2, Avignon.—We set off to Vacluse. W. was strongly excited, predetermined to find the charm of interest, and he did. There is no verdure. But perhaps, on looking

more closely, Petrarch may not have praised his retreat either for shady groves or meadows, and the stream of the Sorgue is eminently beautiful. The rocks are almost sublime,—at least very romantic. W. made a long ramble among the rocks behind the fountain.

3d.—At Nismes, I took W. to see the exterior of both the Maison Carrée and the Arena. He acknowledged their beauty, but experienced no great pleasure. He says, 'I am unable, from ignorance, to enjoy these sights. I receive an impression, but that is all. I have no science, and can refer nothing to principle.' He was, on the other hand, delighted by two beautiful little girls near the Arena. 'I wish I could take them to Rydal Mount.'

4th.—I took W. to the gardens, which pleased him much more than the antiquities. The interior of the Arena did not seem strongly to affect him. Indeed he confessed that he anticipates no great pleasure from this class of objects in his tour.

12th, *Mentone*.—I would gladly have stayed here, but W. was rather anxious to get on.

14th, *Savona*.—W. and I set out early on a walk through this quiet and agreeable town. There is a fort, and before it a greensward, just at this season—which delighted W. more than objects more extraordinary and generally attractive. From the lower part of the fortress the views are fine. After rambling through the town, which is nicely paved with flagstones, and is agreeable to walk in, having a sort of college air about it, we ascended to a couple of monasteries—the one of Capuchins, with an extensive view of the sea, and then to a former Franciscan monastery, now desecrated. W. took a great fancy to this place, thought it a fit residence for such a poet as Chiabrera, who lived here, and whose epitaph is near to Savona. W. sauntered here a long time. In the same street no remarkable building, nor any person who looked as if he knew anything of the great Savona poet.

20th, *Pisa*.—Early in the morning we set out on a walk which W. found most interesting, being in a glen through which a stream flowed, and I soon found that it was in fact the glen in which runs the river Trizardo. We went on, and were so much delighted with the romantic beauties of this glen, terminating in mountains covered with snow, that, in spite of a violent rain, we went on to the wretched village of Torno, beyond which we saw a fall called the Sorgenté, and I at last came to a spot of wonderful sublimity, but still not the most famous spot visited by travellers. W. deems it one of the most remarkable spots he has seen on his journey, and he did not see the very finest point. At that point the mountain was very precipitous, and near, and awfully grand, and a path led to the ravine in which the stream had its origin, called the Sorgenté (?).

25th.—We proceeded to Aquapendente. W. has little pleasure in antiquities, but any form of natural beauty attracts him. W. took a look at the cascade which gives a name to this place, and took a walk to see it again, and he had a glimpse of it on the road.

26th, *Rome*.—We entered Rome under a brilliant sun. We took a walk before the sun went down on my favourite haunt, the Pincian Hill. W. seemed disposed to enjoy Rome, and felt quite as much as I expected at the sight of St. Peter's, and at the view from the Pincian.

27th.—This has been a very interesting day. To W. it must have been unparalleled, in the number and importance of new impressions. We entered the *Campo Vaccino*, noticing all the well-known objects in that sublimest of low fields; and having walked round the *Coliseum*, by which W. seemed sufficiently impressed, the Temples of *Janus*, *Vesta*, *Fortuna Virilis*; the porch of the *Postern* (?) Gate, and also the *Pantheon*, which W. seemed to think unworthy of notice compared with St. Peter's, we rode to St. Peter's, by which W. was more

impressed than I expected he would be. We also looked into the Church of St. Onofrio, where Tasso lies buried. W. is no hunter after sentimental relics. He professes to be regardless of places that have merely a connection with a great man, unless they had also an influence on his works. Hence he cares nothing for the burial-place of Tasso, but he has a deep interest in Vacluse. The distinction is founded on just views, and real, not affected, sympathy.

May 3.—W. drove to the baths of Caracalla. Visited the burial-place of Shelley and Keats,—“two foolish inscriptions.”

I introduced W. to Bunsen. He talked his best to W., and with great facility and felicity of expression pointed out to us monuments from the history of Rome from his own window.

6th.—After breakfast we made call on Severn, who had a subject to talk on with W. besides Art,—poor Keats, his friend. He informs us that the foolish inscription on his tomb is to be superseded by one worthy of him. He denies that his death was hastened by the article in the *Quarterly*.

Planned to go to the Vatican; Gibson, Severn, etc., accompanying us.

8th.—I never saw the marble antiques to greater advantage, for Gibson pointed out to Wordsworth all the prime objects—the Minerva, Apollo, young Augustus, Laocoön, Torso, etc.

10th.—We ascended the Coliseum. The view of the building from above enhances greatly the effect, and W. then seemed fully impressed with the grandeur of the structure, though he seemed still more to enjoy the fine view of the country beyond. He now wishes to make the ascent by moonlight. Certainly no other amphitheatre (and I have seen all that still exist), leaves so strong an impression. . . . Meeting Dr. Carlyle by chance, W. and I took a drive with him to the Corsini Palace.

12th.—(W., Carlyle, and Severn at the Vatican).

Burford, a craniologist, took the dimensions of W.'s head on paper.

13th.—(To Tivoli). We drove to Adrian's Villa, which delighted W. for its scenery, and amused me by its ruins. . . . We took the guide of the house, and inspected the old rocks among which the cascade fell, and the new fall, which has been made by a tunnel. The change was necessary, but has not improved the scene. The new fall is made formal by the masonry above. It runs in one mass, as in a frame, nearly straight; and but for the mass of water, which is considerable, would produce no effect. The old fall had the disadvantage of being hidden by projecting rocks, so that we could only see it by means of paths cut out, and then but imperfectly. This of itself would have been a great disappointment to Wordsworth; but he was amply compensated by the enjoyment the *Cascadelle* afforded him from the opposite side of the valley, from which you see two masses of what are called the Little Falls, and, at the same time, the heavy mass formed by the body of the river. (By-the-by, W. called the Cascadella "Nature's Waterworks.")

22d.—I had to prepare for our final departure. Nothing could exceed Miss Mackenzie's kindness to W. She seems to feel for him the affection of a daughter, and he is much pleased with her. Were it not for her house, his evenings would have been deplorably dull. W. wants the cheering society of women, and Miss M.'s house was open to him every evening. He has invited her to visit him at Rydal.

24th, *Terni*.—The finest waterfall I have ever seen, and W. declares it to be also the most sublime he ever beheld. The upper fall is sublime as seen from above, from the mass of water and the great extent of the fall. The rebound of the water is such as to resemble a cloud, so that the well-known proverb applied to a wood may be literally parodied, 'You

can't see the cascade for the water.' There is a point whence a succession of falls may be seen, which extend to more than 1000 feet.

27th.—At last we came in sight of the Arno, and we had it long afterwards, to the great joy of W.

W. mounted a horse, and I on foot accompanied him, up a steep hill, through a dreary country, to the famous Franciscan convent of *L'Averna*. Our walk was about six or seven miles. *L'Averna* is a lofty mountain, which is visible at a great distance, on account of a mass of grand rocks (a variety in this neighbourhood), on the top of which St. Francis built his house. On entering, we were courteously received by the poor and humble monks. While our meal was preparing, we strolled through the distant forest to a promontory, where we had a wild and interesting country at our feet. A monk we met in the forest told us some of the legendary tales that abound in a region like this.

28th.—The monastery of Camaldoli. The monastery lies delightfully in a secluded valley of firs, chestnuts, etc., and there is a mountain torrent, so that with the monks of *L'Averna* it would be perfect. We were received by a very different kind of monks [from *L'Averna*], gentlemanly monks in white garments, shoes and stockings,—in fact, Benedictines—the gentlemen of the monastic orders, as I have written in their album. While our dinner was preparing, W. and I strolled up the forest. We entered the hermitage, where a few monks reside with greater severity of discipline. When they grow old they come down to the monastery (more than a mile below). Here was six years ago a painter. I chatted then with him. Now he is in the convent. They showed me a picture by him. I made inquiries, and expected to see him in the evening. It was perhaps one of his silent days. I was tired, and left W. to go alone to the hermitage.

7th June, Bologna.—W. all day very uncomfortable. Annoyed

by the length of the streets. He is never thoroughly happy but in the country.

11th, *Certosa*.—It so surpassed our expectations that even W. did not regret the journey. It is the richest church I ever saw, not in its architecture, but in its sculpture. Its peculiar richness lies in the complete preservation of so many magnificent monuments, and all the enrichment which precious marble and the finest minute sculpture could give. W. was annoyed by the large parties who were seeing the church, and, to avoid them, left it, and we went up the town together. We saw everything quietly.

[From Milan to Como.]

12th.—This was one of the most agreeable days of the whole journey,—enjoyed by W. more than any other. Just before we reached Como the scenery became very grand. The view of this most interesting of lakes was in itself to me an unmixed pleasure. W. blended with it painfully pleasing recollections of his old friend Jones, with whom he made the same journey in the year 1794, and who died a few months ago. He also had a still more tender recollection of his journey here in 1820, with his wife and sister. Monkhouse and I were with him.

13th [*Milan*].—I accompanied W. up the Cathedral. A small sum is required of each person, and no one accompanies the traveller; an excellent arrangement, and, as W. truly observed, the cheapest of all sights for which anything is paid. The view of the surrounding country is not to be despised; but that is the least part of the sight. Its singularity consists in the effect produced by the numerous pinnacles on the roof of the church: three rows on each side surmounted by a figure, and all of marble. W. has thus described them:—

That aërial host
Of Figures human and divine,
White as the snows of Apennine.
Indurated by frost.

Concentric rings,
 Each narrowing above each,—the wings,
 The uplifted palms, the silent marble lips,
 The starry zone of sovereign height,—
 All steeped in this portentous light !
 All suffering dim eclipse !

14th.—This day was perhaps the very best of our journey to W. ; at least it partook most of that character which expresses his favourite taste. It was a day of adventure amid beautiful scenery. [Bergamo].

16th, *Brescia*.—A long slip of land, which runs into the water, divides the lake into halves, and ends in a knoll. This is the promontory of Sermione, where Catullus had a villa. W. had a strong desire to visit this point ; but the sight of it hence will probably be sufficient to satisfy him.

18th, *Riva*.—We walked out before breakfast, and took the road to Arco above the lake. W. soon left me, as he was annoyed by the stone walls on the road, and I sauntered on to a little town. I fancied I was in the Tyrol. I strolled back. W.'s non-return made me fear an accident had occurred ; and, this idea having seized me, I could not rest, but walked out in search of him. It was oppressively hot, but I went on ; and guessing that he would be attracted by the appearance of a village and castles in the mountains, I went in that direction. The sound of a waterfall caught my ear. I knew it must catch his. I pursued it, came to a mill, found he had been there, and had breakfasted there. He was gone higher up. I went higher, and found a man who had seen him near Riva. This relieved my apprehensions. I returned. He was there, and we dined at three.

30th *June*.—W. overslept himself this morning, having, for the first time on his journey, I believe, attempted composition. And in the forenoon I wrote some twenty lines by dictation on the Cuckoo at Laverna.

2d *July*. . . . (*Salzburg*).—We came to see the famous

salt-works, which W. had no curiosity about. And we then went on to see the grand lake, the Königsee. I took a walk alone, W. being engaged in composition, re-writing his verses on the Cuckoo at Laverna.

17th Aug. '37.—A very interesting chat with Wordsworth (at S. Rogers') about his poetry. He repeated emphatically that he did not expect, or desire, from posterity any other fame than that which would be given him from the way in which his poems exhibit Man, in his essentially human character and relations,—as child, parent, husband; the qualities which are common to all men, as opposed to those which distinguish one man from another. His sonnets are not therefore the works that he esteems the most. R. and I had both spoken of the sonnets as our favourites. He said, 'You are both wrong.' R., however, attacked the form of the sonnet with exaggeration, that he might be less offensive.

I regret my inability to record more of W.'s conversation. Empson related that Jeffrey had lately told E. that so many people had thought highly of W. that he was resolved to re-peruse his poems, and see if he had anything to retract. W., on this, said that he had no wish now that J. would do anything of the kind. J. had done him all the injury he could. His violent attacks, and the silence of the *Quarterly*, had prevented the sale of his works. Otherwise he might have made his Italian journey twenty years ago. E., I believe, did not end his anecdote, as he had before said to me that J., having done so, found nothing to retract—except, perhaps, a contemptuous and flippant phrase or two. E. says he believes J.'s distaste for W. is honest, mere uncongeniality of mind. Talfourd says the same, who is now going to pay Jeffrey a visit. J. does acknowledge that he was wrong in his treatment of Lamb.

I felt dissatisfied with the journey, because I returned so early in the season, and therefore I resolved on making a short

excursion by way of supplement to the Italian Tour, and as Wordsworth was going to Hereford to visit his brother-in-law, near that city, I proposed to him to go to Hereford, and accompany him on the Wye, etc., his daughter being of the party. Accordingly,

Friday, Sept. 8th, we set out in the Hereford coach. . . .

9th.—Young Mr. Hutchinson came for the W.'s to take them to Brinsop, and between eleven and twelve Mr. Monkhouse also came.

Wordsworth considers the quantity of wood in this country as its defect. You cannot, he says, see any houses or people, The population is thin, and this gives a sense of solitude, which is purely disagreeable in a cultivated country. Solitude in a waste is sublime."

The following are extracts from a series of thirteen letters written by Wordsworth and Robinson jointly to the various members of the Rydal household during the course of this tour. It seems better to give them a place by themselves, than to mingle extracts from them with Robinson's Diary, just quoted:—

"[*London*], *Friday Afternoon*.

MY DEAR AND VERY DEAR SISTER,—Our passports are procured, our carriage bought, and we shall embark at the Tower Stairs on Sunday morning for Calais. How I wish you could have gone with us; but I shall think of you everywhere, and often shall we talk of you. I have seen the Marshalls, who made a thousand inquiries after you; Mrs. and Sara Coleridge—who did the same. It is a week to-day since I arrived here, and I long to be gone, for I am fairly worn off my feet with flying from one part of the town to the other. We shall write from abroad at length, and I hope you will be amused. Farewell, my dearest sister.—Your most affectionate brother,

W. WORDSWORTH."

“Paris, Friday, March 24.

MY DEAR MISS FENWICK,—To spare your eyes, and to save your time, I shall write journal-wise. Arrived at Calais between nine and ten. . . . Snow fell so heavily that it obliged us to take, in one place, an additional horse. The landscapes, though often agreeable to look upon, are almost everywhere disfigured by long lines of thread-paper trees, placed so near each other that they cannot but spindle as they do; multitudes of lopped trees, in lines by the wayside, and the pollards, wherever seen, all so close together as to have no tops worth looking at. The peasantry appeared everywhere taller and stouter than those of England are, in a great number of counties: say Cambridgeshire, Herefordshire, all Wales, and many other parts. At the close of the long war they had become a dwindled race—the conscription having swept away the flower of the youth. They seem now greatly improved in strength and stature. Slept at Grandivilliers.

Wednesday.—Severe frost—not a sign of spring upon the trees; nevertheless small birds chirping among the bushes here and there, and one lark warbling aloft, and soaring, as if he wished to get out of the frosty region through which we were travelling. We were much struck with the appearance of Beauvois, and went into the Cathedral of Saint Denis, which has been undergoing extensive repairs. I am no critic in architecture of any age or country, but I was much gratified with what I saw there. In a recess of one of the side aisles some priests were engaged in some sort of service—one boy chanting, but none of the people present. Candles were arranged thus Λ , and one might almost have thought that they were objects of worship; and a book, a large one, was turned to and fro incessantly, with the stand upon which it was placed. All this is no doubt well understood by Roman Catholics, but, to an ignorant spectator, it has an air of mummary—form, without spirit. Walked on before the carriage, and almost reached Paris before

it overtook me. The variety of *voitures* on the road, their shapes, and the pompous names of some of the public vehicles amused me much ; while the rays of the setting sun made the clouds of dust glitter around those that took either side of the pavement. The pace of some was furious ; I observed several horses slip on the pavement, and then rear, but neither driver nor passengers seemed to care a jot about the matter. . . .

What shall I say of Paris ? Many splendid edifices and some fine streets have been added since I first saw it at the close of the year '90. But I have had little feeling to spare for novelties, my heart and mind having been awakened everywhere to sad and strange recollections of what was then passing, and of subsequent events, which have either occurred in this vast city, or which have flowed from it as their source.

Saturday Morning.—Yesterday, Friday, spent seven hours nearly in rambling up and down on foot. The frost severe ; the poor swans—in basins of water in the Tuileries garden—hiding their bills and as much of their necks as they could among the pure white feathers of their wings ; one part were standing upon the ice, another couched upon the wooden platform in front of their little huts or kennels. The lions of the fountains spouted out vigorously their glittering waters in striking contrast with their long beards of icicles. Went to the Louvre. The old pictures removed to make room for the annual exhibition of French art. We were sorry for this, as the new things gave us but little pleasure, though not uninteresting, as showing the present state of French Art, which really does not seem to have much to boast of. The most impressive picture we noticed has for its subject Lord Strafford kneeling down, on his way to his place of execution, to receive the benediction of Archbishop Laud. This is said to be purchased by the Duke of Sutherland. He has done well, for the artist deserves encouragement. . . . We then went to

the Luxemburg—a number of French artists copying pictures, which had better be buried. Here remembrances pressed upon me, some tragical; and some, my dear Mary and dear sister (for this letter is intended also for you), of very different character. Do you recollect how pleased we were in the gardens of this palace to see the boys rolling and sporting and hiding themselves among the heaps of withered leaves, as they do with us among hay-cocks? From the Luxemburg we went through a part of Paris that is very interesting to me—the Fauxburg St.-Germain, to the Elysian fields. . . . What pleased me most was to see the number of shabby vehicles, hackney coaches, cabriolets, etc.; several of them crowded with children, who seemed to enjoy themselves in spite of the severe cold. The triumphal arch, which terminates the alley of the Long-champs, is a grand structure; worthy of being the entry of this city, or rather of announcing your approach to it. But why does not modern Art dress her France, and her histories with their wrongs? Dined at a *restaurateur's*, after a walk of six hours without resting; and should have spent the evening in writing letters, but was afraid of hurting my eyes.” . . .

H. C. R. to Mrs. Wordsworth.

“Marseilles, 6th April 1837.

MA CHÈRE MAMAN,—As I pass among the intelligent for the son of M. votre Mari, both of our characters require that you should not disclaim the revered title. Whether I owe mine to any strong personal resemblance, or to any filial assiduities, I cannot pretend to determine. Perhaps the latter. In fact M. le Père, not having the full possession of his eyesight, or entire use of his fingers, I have undertaken to relieve him of a portion of the labour of writing, by narrating the history of our journey, leaving him to put in the sense and the sentiment, which generally occupy but a minute space in a traveller's diary. We left *Paris* on Sunday the 26th, glad to

escape from the tumult of the gay city. . . . We set out in chilly and cheerless weather, which seems resolved to stay by us. We made but half a day's journey to *Fontainebleau*, seven and a half posts (a post is about five miles). Here I bore in my mind that we had, in this place seventeen years ago, heard the cannon announce the birth of a Son of France; he was called the *Child of Miracle*. It will require a greater miracle to place him on the throne of his fathers. . . . On the first of this month we first came to an object, both new to us, and having an historical interest—a grand triumphal arch erected in honour of the victories of that arch Whig-Radical *Marius*, and a sadly-dilapidated Roman theatre. But the next day presented a far more congenial object in the *Vaucluse* of Petrarch. We left our carriage in the venerable and decayed ex-papal city of Avignon and were driven to the poet's asylum and haunt. This famous spot is a naked valley at the end of which, under a rock, like Malham cove, rushes out a stream of great beauty; and lofty and wild rocks give an earnest and even savage character to the scene. But it is treeless and nearly grassless, and I therefore could not *fancy* it the residence by choice of the writer of the first perfect sonnets, sonnets pre-eminently soft, and sweet even to effeminacy. St. John the Baptist, on the contrary, might have dwelt there, but he could not have found wild honey, for there can be no bees where there are no flowers. Next morning we rambled about Avignon, were amused by the display of national and professional character in the *Invalides*, where the Government have allowed the veterans of the French army to erect a wooden pyramidal monument in honour of Buonaparte. Indeed the walls of the garden are covered with inscriptions triumphantly recording the conquests and victories of the French. And under this title is found the battle of Waterloo!!! On the same day we proceeded to Nismes, seeing by the way the most beautiful aqueduct the Romans have left us, called the *Pont*

du Gard. As the vicinity of N. has the very finest Roman aqueduct, so the city itself has a very fine temple, and ample remains of a noble amphitheatre. Few places in Italy combine so much to gratify the learned architect. And as far as antiquities are concerned, an unlearned traveller's curiosity might well be satisfied. As if, however, to try the superior power of nature over art, two little girls had cunningly placed themselves before one of the entrances into the Arènes, and were plucking the wings of a dead bird. Their beautiful eyes so fascinated the poet that had we been on our homeward not outward bound voyage, and could I have been bribed to assist in the atrocious theft, I believe he might have been wrought on to seize the little innocents, not indeed like an ogre, to feed on them, but with the more laudable purpose of improving the Westmoreland breed. Jestings apart, as far as the obtaining a distinct notion of Ancient Art in Architecture belongs to the motive and inducement for a tour into Italy, the journey may be considered to have attained its purpose."

Wordsworth to his Wife.

"Toulon, 8th April.

. . . I will just mention what pleased me most,—the day at Vaucluse, where I was enchanted with the power and beauty of the stream, and the wildness and grandeur of the rocks, and several minor beauties which Mr. R. has not noticed, and which I should have particularised, but for this blinding cold. I was much pleased with Nismes, with Marseilles, but most of all, with the drive between Marseilles and Toulon, which is singularly romantic and varied. From a height above Toulon, as we approached, we had a noble view of the purple waters of the Mediterranean, purple no doubt from the state of the atmosphere; for at Marseilles, where we first saw it, the colour was not different from the sea of our own island. At Nismes the evening was calm, the atmosphere unusually clear, and the

air warm, not from its own temperature, but from the effect of the sun. I there first observed the stars, as appearing brighter and at a greater variety of depths, *i.e.* advancing one before the other more than they do with us. . . . One of the few promises of summer, which we have had, is the peach-blossom abundantly scattered over some parts of the country, and very beautiful, especially when neighboured by the cypress, a tree that is plentiful in this part of the south of France. . . .”

Wordsworth to his Sister.

“[NICE,] April 10th.

MY DEAREST SISTER,—. . . Thus far we have rather seemed to be flying from the spring than approaching it. Yesterday we came from a place called Luc to Cannes. It snowed, it hailed, it rained, it blew, and lucky it is for you, notwithstanding the beauty of the country, that you are not with us. . . . The olive groves, when they first made their appearance, looked no better than pollard willows of bushy size; but they are now become trees, oftener a good deal larger than our largest hollies, though I have seen none so large as our best birch-trees. They suffice to give a sylvan character to the whole country, which was long wanting. Orange-trees also now occur frequently, in plots; and on entering this town, we first saw them with the fruit on. . . . At Cannes we saw the Villa which, with a taste sufficiently odd, the owner of Brougham Hall is building there. Beautiful and splendid as the situation is, I should much prefer Brougham Hall, with its Lowther woods and two flowing streams, clear and never dry. Imagine to yourself a deeply indented bay  like that, on the right hand lofty mountains, and the left horn, ground sinking down into a low point of land, so as almost to meet an island, upon which stands a fortress, famous as being the place where the Man of the Masque de fer was confined. Such is the general description of the bay of Cannes. The town lies behind the projection, under which I

have placed a cross; that projection is of rock, and adorned with the ruins of a castle, with a church still in use, and also with some decayed buildings of a religious kind. . . . Lord B.'s villa stands upon olive and orange groves that slope down to the Mediterranean, distant about a quarter of a mile or less, a narrow beach of yellow and smooth sand being interposed. Broken ground runs behind the house, scattered over with olive and other fruit trees, also some pines; but the frost had sadly nipped the oranges, and their leaves were scattered pretty thick under the trees. If the dry channels of the ravines worn by the occasional floods were constantly filled with pure foaming water, and the rocks were of less crumbling material—they are a sort of sandstone—this situation would be enviable, and yet still it would want our oaks and birches, etc., as it does actually want the chestnut and walnut trees, that adorn, as you know well, many parts of the north of Italy and Switzerland. Do not think I say too much of Cannes, when I tell you, that beyond the left or eastern horn of this bay, and near the road leading to Antibes, which, as the map will show, is the next town on the road leading from Cannes to Nice, Buonaparte disembarked from the island of Elba. The postillion pointed out the spot. Antibes is the frontier town of France.”

Wordsworth to his Sister.

“Rome, 27th April.

. . . Though I have seen the Coliseum, the Pantheon, and all the other boasted things, nothing has in the least approached the impressions I received from the inside of St. Peter's. . . .

I have been enchanted with the beauty of the scenery in innumerable places, though almost in full as many there is a deplorable want of beauty in the surface, where the forms are fine. Speaking of the Apennines in contradistinction to the maritime Alps, for one scarcely can say where one begins and the other ends, I should say that as far as I have seen, they

are both in beauty and grandeur immeasurably inferior, often lumpish in their forms, and oftener still, harsh, arid, and ugly on their surface. Besides, these mountains have an ill habit of sending down torrents so rapidly that the rivers are perpetually changing their beds; and in consequence the valleys, which ought to be green and fertile, are overspread with sand and gravel. But why find fault when much that I have seen is so enchanting! We had scarcely been two hours in Rome, when we walked up to the Pincian hill, near our hotel. The sun was just set, but the western sky glowed beautifully. A great part of the city of modern Rome lay below us, and St. Peter's rose on the opposite side; and, for dear Sir George Beaumont's sake, I will mention that at no great distance from the dome of the Church on the line of the glowing horizon, was seen one of those broad-topped pines, looking like a little cloud in the sky, with a slender stalk to connect it with its native earth. I mention this because a friend of Mr. Robinson's whom we had just accidentally met, told us that this very tree which I admired so much had been paid for by our dear friend, that it might stand as long as nature might allow. . . ."

Wordsworth to his Wife and Sister.

"May 6.

. . . Several times I have been at St. Peter's, have heard Mass before the Pope in the Sistine Chapel, and after that seen him pronounce the benediction upon the people from a balcony in front of St. Peter's, and seen his Holiness scatter bits of paper from aloft upon the multitude, indulgences, I suppose. . . .

The Monte Mario commands the most magnificent view of modern Rome, the Tiber, and the surrounding country. Upon this elevation I stood under the pine, redeemed by Sir G. Beaumont, of which I spoke in my former letter. I touched

the bark of the magnificent tree, and I could almost have kissed it out of love for his memory. One of the most agreeable excursions we have made was with Miss Mackenzie and Mr. Collier to the tomb of Cecilia Metella, and the other antiquities in its neighbourhood. This was on the first of May. The air was clear and bright, and the distant hills were beautifully clothed in air, and the meadows sparkling with rich wild-flowers. In our ramble, after alighting from the carriage, we came to the spot which bears the name of the Fountain of Egeria, but this is all a fiction; nevertheless, the grotto and its trickling water, and pendant ivy, and vivid moss, have enough of poetry and painting about them to make the spot very interesting, independent of all adjuncts whether of fact or fiction. . . . The only very celebrated object which has fairly disappointed me, on account of my ignorance, I suppose, is the Pantheon. But after all it is not particular objects, with the exception perhaps of the inside of St. Peter's, that make the glory of this city; but it is the boundless variety of combinations of old and new, caught in ever-varying connection with the surrounding country, when you look down from some one or other of the seven hills, or from neighbouring eminences not included in the famous seven. To-morrow we are going into the Campagna to see a sheep-shearing upon the farm of a wealthy peasant, who lives in that sad and solemn district,—as I believe it is, around his abode,—which lies about five miles along the Appian way. And there this hospitable man dwells among his herds and flocks with a vast household, like one of the Patriarchs of old. . . .”

Wordsworth to his Sister.

“Rome, May 9.

. . . The spot from which I write is surrounded by romantic beauty, and every part of it renowned in history or fable. The lake of Nemi is the celebrated Speculum Dianæ, and that of

Albano still more famous, as you may read in Livy the historian. The window of the room from which I am writing has a full view of the Mediterranean in front. The house was formerly a palace of the King of Spain; in the court below is a fountain, water spouting from the mouths of two lions into a basin, and a jet *d'eau* throwing up more, that falls back into the same basin, thence descends a flight of steps eighty in number, into a large Italian garden; below that the grass falls in a slope thickly set with olive, vine, and fruit trees, then comes a plain, or what looks like one, with plots of green corn, that look like rich meadows, spreading and winding far and wide; then succeeds a dusky marsh; and lastly, the Mediterranean Sea. All this tract is part of the ancient Latium, the supposed kingdom of Æneas, which he wrested along with the fair Lavinia from Turnus. On the right, a little below the hotel, is a stately grove of ilex belonging to the Palace or Villa Doria. . . ."

Wordsworth to his Wife.

"Salzburg, July 5.

. . . I have, however, to regret that this journey was not made some years ago,—to regret it, I mean, as a poet; for though we have had a great disappointment in not seeing Naples, etc., and more of the country among the Apennines not far from Rome, Horace's country for instance, and Cicero's Tusculum, my mind has been enriched by innumerable images, which I could have turned to account in verse, and vivified by feelings which earlier in my life would have answered noble purposes, in a way now they are little likely to do. But I do not repine; on the contrary, I am very happy. . . . Absence, in a foreign country, and at a great distance, is a condition, for many minds, at least for mine, often pregnant with remorse.—Dearest Mary, when I have felt how harshly I often demeaned myself to you, my

inestimable fellow-labourer, while correcting the last edition of my poems, I often pray to God that He would grant us both life, that I may make some amends to you for that and all my unworthiness. But you know into what an irritable state this timed and overstrained labour often put my nerves. My impatience was ungovernable, as I *then* thought, but I now feel that it ought to have been governed. You have forgiven me, I know, as you did then, and perhaps that somehow troubles me the more. I say nothing of this to you, dear Dora, though you also have had some reason to complain. . . .

How sorry I am, dear Dora, for poor Mr. Hallam ; he had just been touring in the beautiful country where now we are, before he lost his son so suddenly. Beautiful indeed this country is ; in a picturesque and even poetic point of view more interesting than most of what we have seen. It is something between the finest part of Alpine Switzerland and the finest parts of Great Britain, I mean in North Wales, Scotland, and our own region. In many particulars it excels Italy ; also, greatly indeed, the south of France. The mountains are finely formed, and the vales not choked up, nor the hill-sides disfigured by the sort of cultivation which the sunshine of Italy puts thereupon—vines, olives, citrons, lemons, and all kinds of fruit-trees. Yesterday we passed through a country of mountain, meadow, lawn, and the richest wood spread about with all the magnificence of an everlasting park. . . .”

H. C. R. to Mrs. Wordsworth.

“Salzburg, [July 11.]

. . . A certain degree of repose of mind must have been the cause, though you know it is not the effect, of the exercise of verse-making. You are to have the product from Munich, and will be well pleased with it, I promise you ; and it is in the verse you think now best becomes him. We are now about to make our last journey of country sight-seeing. We have

only one more town to see; and then the wheels may run as glib as they please. Only I must take care that you do not receive him as my brother was received by his wife, who scolded him for coming back too soon. We are nearly at the close of the interesting part of our journey. After Munich it will be mere travelling. There I hope, and at Heidelberg also, I trust, letters will arrive. For I perceive that he is never so happy as when a letter comes. His spirits flag when any unusual delay takes place. We were lucky at Milan and Venice. I should say he was; for letters arrived at the one just as we were leaving, and at the other just before our arrival. . . .

P.S.—I know not what he has written about my friend Miss Mackenzie. You have no cause of jealousy, but Dora has. Miss M. seemed to feel towards him as towards a father, and will certainly pay you one day a visit. She has, however, reached an age at which maternal love is much more usual, and to be desired, than filial. We have heard of the death of the dear reforming king. We do not mean to be detained more than a week by the necessity of ordering a suit of travelling mourning. Long live Victoria I. and her Whig Ladies of Honour!!!”

Wordsworth to his Wife.

“*Munich, Monday, July 17.*

. . . At present I consider our *tour* finished; and all my thoughts are fixed upon home, where I am most impatient to be, . . . particularly as there are (as must be the case with all companions in travel) so many things in habit and inclination, where Mr. R. and I differ. Upon these I shall not dwell at present, as the only one I care about is this: he has no home to go to but chambers, and wishes to stay abroad, at least to linger abroad, which I, having the blessing of a home,

do not. Again, he takes delight in loitering about towns, gossiping, and attending reading-rooms, and going to coffee-houses, and in *table d'hôtes*, etc., gabbling German or any other tongue, all which places and practices are my abomination. In the evenings I cannot read, as the candlelight hurts my eyes; and I have therefore no resource but to go to bed, while I should like exceedingly, when upon our travels, if it were agreeable to him, to rise early; but though he will do this, he dislikes it much, so that I don't press it. He sleeps so much at odd times in the day that he does not like going to bed till midnight. In this, and a hundred other things, our tastes and habits are quite at variance, though nobody can be more obliging in giving up his own; but you must be aware it is very unpleasant in me to require this. In fact, I have very strong reasons for wishing this tour, which I have found so beneficial to my mind, at an end for the sake of my body. . . .

. . . A man must travel alone, I mean without one of his family, to feel what his family is to him! How often have I wished for James to assist me about the carriage, greasing the wheels, etc., a most tedious employment, fastening the baggage, etc., for nothing can exceed the stupidity of these foreigners. Tell him how I wish I had been rich enough to bring him along with me! . . . God bless you all!

Thursday Morning, 20th.

. . . I am quite tired of this place, the weather has been very bad, and after the Galleries close, which is at twelve o'clock and one, I have nothing to do; and, as I cannot speak German, time moves very heavily. The Ticknors are here, and I have passed a couple of hours every evening with them. —God bless you again! . . .”

Another brief account of this Italian tour was given by

Robinson in a letter addressed by him to Barron Field. In that letter he said of Wordsworth :—

“ His eye for colour seems more cultivated than his sense of form : at least the picture galleries were more attractive to him than the museums of sculpture. But, in general, he will not allow the plastic artist of any kind to place himself by the side of the poet as his equal ; and in this he is, beyond all doubt, right. He felt the pathetic grandeur of the environs of Rome, and regretted that bad weather did not allow him to visit all the spots of the adjacent mountains, in romantic interest the most profoundly attractive of any place that has a name upon the earth.”

Writing to Moxon, his publisher, from Brussels, on the 2d of August, Wordsworth said he would arrive in a day or two, and go to his house. On his return to England, he stayed in London for about a month.

The following is from Lady Richardson's note-book, quoted in the *Autobiography of Mrs. Fletcher*, pp. 228-30 :—

“ We had a most agreeable surprise on the 19th of August 1837. Mrs. Smith, of the dockyard, appeared at Darland with Wordsworth and Dora. We did not even know the poet had returned from his Italian tour. He looks somewhat thinner and paler than when we left Lakeland, and, as he himself expresses it, ‘ is too home-sick to be comfortable ’ ; but he admired the arrangements of our little garden, and entered, with his usual indulgence for Nature, into the merits of our one large elm-tree. He confesses himself to have been too old for a first visit to Italy, and that his visit with Crabb Robinson was too hurried for enjoyment ; that at Rome he had not time to get over his disappointment at the old and new being jumbled together ; and he thought the effect of the Coliseum

was lessened by the Popish ornaments being obtruded into it. He mentioned the beauty of the flowers and ferns that grew on its walls as its best attractions. He said he knew too little to make Rome so enjoyable as it might have been. He made the discovery, also, that he had no real taste for sculpture, as he fell asleep before the Venus de Medici at Florence. He was more impressed by the Apollo, because there is mind there, but without mind he cannot be much interested in mere form, torsos and other forms, which he allows may be very interesting to students of art. He spoke with most interest of the ruin at Nismes, and said he saw nothing in Italy equal to the combined effect of the situation and edifice of the Pont du Gard at Nismes. Of the maritime Alps route also, and of the Mediterranean generally, he spoke with much delight. In Vaucluse he had been in no degree disappointed; the colour of the stream and the beauty of the flowers delighted him much. He deplores the want of fine timber in Italy, and the entire absence of gentlemen's country houses and parks throughout the country of France. These observations chiefly took place on the Sunday evening which he spent with us.

He remarked that he thought the French peasant improved in a mere animal point of view; that he had formerly been much struck with the extreme feebleness of frame among the French, but this was not the case now. He mentioned a tree which he had reposed under forty-eight years ago at Liége, as one of great size and beauty, and while on this subject he branched off with interest on the comparative merits of trees. He admires the cypress of the south as a beautiful spiral accompaniment to a landscape, but he holds the yew higher as a 'fine creature.' His conversation did not become truly Wordsworthian, however, till he entered on the *Life of Scott*, three volumes of which he had read. There was so much feeling, wisdom, and elevation in all he said on this subject, that, in his own words, we could truly say after he left us,

. So did he speak,
The words he uttered shall not pass away,
For they sank into me.

And yet to attempt to note them down seems hopeless. He said that it gave him pain to discover what sufferings Scott had gone through from his connection with printers, and the unworthy shifts he had recourse to, to get rid of his quires of unsold writings. 'It is cruel so to expose a great man's weaknesses.' 'Scott's sentiments (he said) sometimes shock me; and when I think of his free, frank manner, of what an open creature he was, and then find that he was involved in all this load of concealment and evasion, it gives me great pain,—it must do so to all his friends. The day before we parted he spoke to me much of his portion of happiness in life, which he considered great; but it appeared to me at the time that he did not truly estimate his position as a man of genius. He appeared to think that the condition of an official under Government, or that of a country gentleman, was a higher one than that of a man of genius.' This, Wordsworth said, was the more extraordinary from Scott having been born in the rank of a gentleman, and, therefore, he ought more truly to have estimated the real state of the case. Dr. Johnson had powerfully stated the truth on this subject, and Scott would have been a wiser and a happier man had he rested on his genius, rather than on his accumulating acres, and living beyond his means. Wordsworth then launched forth on the startling opinion pronounced by Scott on Johnson's poem on *The Vanity of Human Wishes* being the finest poem in the language. He repeated two or three lines, and dissected them in the way he used to do some of Lord Byron's."

The following occurs in the Memoirs of Thomas Moore:—

"8th August 1837.— . . . Dined with Rogers. Party at dinner: Wordsworth and Miss Rogers. A good deal from

Wordsworth about his Continental tour. In talking of travelling in England, said that he used always to travel on the top of the coach, and still prefers it. Has got at different times subjects for poems by travelling thus. A story he has told in verse (which I have never seen) of two brothers parting on the top of a hill (to go to different regions of the globe), and walking silently down the opposite sides of the hill,* was, he said, communicated to him by a fellow-traveller outside a coach. Also another story about a peat hill which had been preserved with great care by a fond father, after the death of the youth who had heaped it up.†

10th August 1837.— . . . In talking of letter-writing this evening, Taylor again mentioned the habits of Southey in this respect, and Wordsworth said that, for his own part, such was his horror of having his letters *preserved*, that in order to guard against it he always took pains to make them as bad and dull as possible.” ‡

Wordsworth met his daughter Dora in London, and went down with her to Brinsop Court, Herefordshire, on September 13th; Mr. Markham accompanying H. C. Robinson to a place on the Wye. They spoke of revisiting Tintern, but no record survives of whether they did so or not.

The following occurs in the *Journals of Caroline Fox*:§—

“September 9, 1837.—A glorious morning with Hartley Coleridge, who gradually unfolded on many things in a tone well worthy of a poet’s son. . . . He took us to the outside of his rosy cottage, also to that which had been occupied by Wordsworth and De Quincey. . . . He talked of the former.

* See *A Tradition of Oker Hall in Darley Dale, Derbyshire*: Works, vol. vii. p. 221.

† *Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence of Thomas Moore*, edited by Lord John Russell, vol. vii. pp. 196-7.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 198.

§ Vol. i. pp. 34-8.

He thinks that his peculiar beauty consists in viewing things as amongst them, mixing himself up with everything that he mentions, so that you admire the man in the thing, the involved man. He says he is a most unpleasant companion in a tour, from his terrible fear of being cheated ; neither is he very popular as a neighbour. He calls him more a man of genius than talent, for whilst the fit of inspiration lasts he is every inch a poet. When he tries to write without, he is very dragging. . . . We walked up to Rydal Mount, but Wordsworth is in Herefordshire, on his return from Italy. . . . We saw the last and, as Hartley Coleridge considers, the best portrait taken of Wordsworth in Italy, also a very fine cast taken from Chantrey's bust. . . . He much regrets the tendency of the present day to bestow more admiration on intellectual than moral worth, and entered into an interesting disquisition on Wordsworth's theory that a man of genius *must* have a good heart. To make facts tally with theory, Wordsworth would deny genius right and left to Byron, Voltaire, and other difficult cases. We asked about Wordsworth's daughter ; had she inherited any of her father's genius ? 'Would you have the disease of genius to descend like scrofula ?' was his answer, and added that he did consider it a disease which amazingly interfered with the enjoyment of things as they are, and unfitted the possessor for communion with common minds."

After this visit to Brinsop, Wordsworth returned to Rydal, and the following letters were written by him towards the close of that year. To Robinson he wrote, December 15th :—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . To take the points of your letter in order : Serjeant T. did forward me a petition, and I objected to sign it, not because I was misinformed, but because allegations were made in it of the truth of which I knew nothing of my own knowledge, and because I thought it impolitic to speak

of the American publishers, who had done what there was no law to prevent them doing, in such harsh and injurious terms. This, I thought, would exasperate them, and put some of them upon opposing a measure, who might otherwise have felt no objection to it. Soon after this I had the pleasure of seeing a very intelligent American gentleman at Rydal, whom you perhaps have seen, Mr. Duar, to whom I told my reasons for not signing the petition. He approved of them, and said that the proper way of proceeding would have been to lay the case before our Foreign Secretary, whose duty it would be to open a communication with the American Foreign Secretary, and through that channel the correspondence would regularly proceed to Congress. I am, however, glad to hear that the petition was received as you report. When I was last in London, I breakfasted at Miss Rogers' with the American minister, Mr. Stephenson, who reprobated in the strongest terms of indignation the injustice of the present system. Both gentlemen spoke also of its impolicy in respect to America, as it prevented publishers, through fear of immediate underselling, from reprinting valuable English works. You may be sure that a reciprocity in this case is by me much desired, though far less on my account—for I cannot encourage a hope that my family will be much benefited by it—than from a love of justice, and the pleasure it would give me to know that the families of successful men of letters might take such station as proprietors, which they who are amused or benefited by their writings in both Continents seem ready to allow them. . . . ”

To Sir W. Rowan Hamilton he wrote from Rydal Mount, December 21, 1837 :—*

“ . . . As to patronage, you are right in supposing that I hold it in little esteem for helping genius forward in the Fine

* See *Life of Sir W. Rowan Hamilton*, vol. ii. pp. 225-9.

Arts ; especially those whose medium is words. Sculpture and painting *may* be helped by it ; but even in these departments there is much to be dreaded. The French have established an academy at Rome upon an extensive scale ; and, so far from doing good, I was told by every one that it had done much harm. The plan is this : they select the most distinguished students from the school, or academy, at Paris, and send them to Rome with handsome stipends, by which they are tempted into idleness, and of course into vice ; so that it looks like a contrivance for preventing the French nation, and the world at large, from profiting by the genius which Nature may have bestowed, and which, left to itself, would, in most cases perhaps, have prospered. The principal, I was indeed told the *only*, condition imposed upon these students, is that each of them send annually some work of his hands to Paris. When at Rome I saw a great deal of English artists ; they seemed to be living happily and doing well, though, as you are aware, the public patronage any of them receive is trifling.

Genius in poetry, or any department of what is called the *Belles Lettres*, is much more likely to be cramped than fostered by public support ; better wait to reward those who have done their work, though even here national rewards are not necessary, unless the labourers be, if not in poverty, at least in narrow circumstances. Let the laws be but just to them, and they will be sure of attaining competence, if they have not misguided their own talents, or misapplied them. The cases of Chatterton, Burns, and others might, it should seem, be urged against the conclusion that help *beforehand* is not required ; but I do think that in the temperament of the two I have mentioned there was something which, however favourable had been their circumstances, however much they had been encouraged and supported, would have brought on their ruin. As to what patronage can do in science, discoveries in

physics, mechanic arts, etc., you know far better than I can pretend to do.

As to 'better canons of criticism, and general improvement of scholars,' I really, speaking without affectation, am so little of a critic or scholar, that it would be presumptuous in me to *write* upon the subject to you. . . . In attempting to comply with your wish, I should only lose myself in a wilderness. I have been applied to, to give lectures upon poetry in a public institution in London, but I was conscious that I was neither competent to the office, nor the public prepared to receive what I should have felt it my duty to say, however imperfectly.

I had a very pleasant, and not profitless, tour on the Continent, though with one great drawback—the being obliged, on account of the cholera, to return without seeing Naples and its neighbourhood.”

The following is Rowan Hamilton's reply to the above letter of Wordsworth :—

“ *Observatory, December 30, 1837.*

. . . I agree with you in thinking that direct patronage can do little for genius. . . . What I look to, then—and even that without any very sanguine hope of great and immediate good—is the drawing forth of *critical essays*, more philosophical and elaborate than would suit the taste of the mere ordinary reading public, by inviting and encouraging the presentation of such essays to its *Transactions*.*

May I dare to illustrate my meaning by applying it to your own case? Suppose that *you* could be induced to favour us with any critical reflections, detailed and particular, if you so chose—but I prefer to conceive them as general and abstractly philosophical—embodying or sketching out any views of yours, respecting the spirit and philosophy of criticism, or the nature and essential laws of poetry, or the objects and prospects of

* Of the Royal Irish Academy.

literature,—and illustrated by applications, or not, at your pleasure ;—suppose this done, with so little adaptation to prevailing popular tastes, that in whatever manner the work might be published it must be as bread cast upon the waters, to be found only after many days ; yet not, like poetry, appealing to the universal *heart* of man, but rather to the calm deliberate *judgment* of the thoughtful student or philosopher ; I think that no more appropriate mode of publishing such a composition could easily be devised, than by presenting it to a literary society like ours, whose published *Transactions* have among learned men an increasing circulation, at home and abroad, and who would of course present you in return with a number of separate copies (in our case fifty).” *

* *Life of Sir W. Rowan Hamilton*, vol. ii. pp. 229-30.

CHAPTER XL.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH HENRY REED.

IN December 1838 Wordsworth told Crabb Robinson that the University of Durham had conferred upon him the degree of D.C.L. "last summer." "It was the first time that the honour had been received there by any one in person." He added, that the matter was worth adverting to "only as a sign that Imaginative Literature, notwithstanding the homage now paid to Science, was not wholly without esteem."

Robinson went down to the Lakes in the end of December 1838. He tells us that he called with Wordsworth (January 3, '39), on Miss Fenwick, and adds:—

"Wordsworth spoke of poetry. At the head of the natural and sensual school was Chaucer, the greatest poet of his class. Next comes Burns: Crabbe, too, has great truth, but he is too far removed from beauty and refinement. This, however, is better than the opposite extreme. I told Wordsworth that in this he unconsciously sympathised with Goethe."

He records Miss Harriet Martineau's impression of Wordsworth's talk. "Sometimes he is annoying from the pertinacity with which he dwells on trifles: at other times he flows on in the utmost grandeur, leaving a strong impression of inspiration."

Southey came on from Keswick to visit Miss Fenwick, and meet the Wordsworths and Arnolds. He was depressed and dull. Wordsworth remarked on his having become completely dead to everything but books. When in Paris lately with

Robinson, he never entered the town, cared only for the old bookshops. When Southey had gone, Dr. Arnold expressed a wonder if *he* should ever, like Southey, lose interest in things, retaining interest in books only; and Wordsworth said: 'If I must lose my interest in one of them, I would rather give up books than men.'

Staying on at the Lakes till February, Robinson records his impression of Wordsworth's political pamphlets written in 1818. He says they show that Wordsworth "would have been a masterly political pamphleteer. There is nothing cloudy about his style," and he instances such a sentence as "Independence is the explosive energy of conceit making blind havoc with expediency."

Although Wordsworth did not write much himself during the last decade of his life, he kept up an extensive correspondence with his friends, by the help of his ever willing amanuenses at Rydal Mount. Much of his correspondence with two of his friends—Professor Henry Reed, Philadelphia, who edited his poems in America, and Mr. Moxon, his London publisher—has an interest for posterity, as it referred to his own works, to literary questions, and contemporary politics. It may be the most convenient arrangement to print some of his letters to these two friends in chronological order, each series by itself. Two of the former, but none of the latter, have been already published. The following were addressed to Professor Reed, Philadelphia:—

"London, August 19, 1837.

MY DEAR SIR,—Upon returning from a tour of several months upon the Continent, I find two letters from you awaiting my arrival, along with the edition of my poems you have done me the honour of editing. . . . It is gratifying to one, whose aim as an author has been to reach the hearts of his fellow-creatures of all ranks and in all stations, to find that he

has succeeded in any quarter; and still more must he be gratified to learn that he has pleased in a distant country men of simple habits and cultivated taste, who are at the same time widely acquainted with literature. Your second letter, accompanying the edition of the poems, I have read; but, unluckily, have it not before me. It was lent to Serjeant Talfourd, on account of the passage in it that alludes to the possible and desirable establishment of English copyright in America. I shall now hasten to notice the edition which you have superintended of my poems. . . . I have only to regret, in respect to this volume, that it should have been published before my last edition, in the correction of which I took great pains, as my last labour in that way, and which moreover contains several additional pieces. It may be allowed me also to express a hope that such a law will be passed ere long by the American legislature, as will place English authors in general upon a better footing in America than at present they have obtained, and that the protection of copyright between the two countries will be reciprocal. The vast circulation of English works in America offers a temptation for hasty and incorrect printing; and that same vast circulation would, without adding to the price of each copy of an English work in a degree that could be grudged or thought injurious by any purchaser, allow an American remuneration which might add considerably to the comforts of English authors who may be in narrow circumstances, yet who at the same time may have written solely from honourable motives. Besides, justice is the foundation on which both law and practice ought to rest. . . .

I cannot conclude, however, without assuring you that the acknowledgments which I receive from the vast continent of America are among the most grateful that reach me. What a vast field is there open to the English mind, acting through our noble language! . . . Believe me gratefully, your much obliged friend,

WM. WORDSWORTH."

“ Rydal Mount, Dec. 23, 1839.

MY DEAR SIR,—The year is upon the point of expiring ; and a letter of yours, dated May 7th, though not received till late in June (for I was moving about all last spring, and part of the summer), remains unacknowledged. . . .

There is a difference of more than the length of your life, I believe, between our ages. I am standing on the brink of that vast ocean I must sail so soon ; I must speedily lose sight of the shore ; and I could not once have conceived how little I now am troubled by the thought of how long or short a time they who remain on that shore may have sight of me.

The other day I chanced to be looking over a MS. poem, belonging to the year 1803, though not actually composed till many years afterwards. It was suggested by visiting the neighbourhood of Dumfries, in which Burns had resided, and where he died ; it concluded thus:—

Sweet Mercy to the gates of heaven
This minstrel led, his sins forgiven ;
The rueful conflict, the heart riven
 With vain endeavour,
And memory of earth's bitter leaven
 Effaced for ever.

Here the verses closed ; but I instantly added, the other day—

But why to him confine the prayer,
When kindred thoughts and yearnings bear
On the frail heart the purest share
 With all that live ?
The best of what we do and are,
 Just God, forgive !

The more I reflect upon this last exclamation, the more I feel, and perhaps it may in some degree be the same with you, justified in attaching comparatively small importance to any literary monument that I may be enabled to leave behind. It is well, however, I am convinced, that men think otherwise in the earlier part of their lives ; and why it is so, is a point I need not touch upon in writing to you. Before I dismiss this

subject, let me thank you for the extract from your intelligent friend's letter; and allow me to tell you that I could not but smile at your Boston critic placing my name by the side of Cowley. I suppose he cannot be such a simpleton as to mean anything more than that the same measure of reputation or fame, if that be not too presumptuous a word, is due to us both. . . .

I should be truly glad to see you in the delightful spot where I have long dwelt; and I have more pleasure in saying this to you, because, in spite of my old infirmity, my strength exceeds that of most men of my years, and my general health continues to be, as it always has been, remarkably good. . . .

There is an opinion pretty current among discerning persons in England, that Republics are not to be trusted in money concerns,—I suppose because the sense of honour is more obtuse, the responsibility being divided among so many. For my own part, I have as little or less faith in absolute despotisms, except that they are more easily convinced that it is politic to keep up their credit by holding to their engagements. What power is maintained by this practice was shown by Great Britain in her struggle with Buonaparte. This lesson has not been lost on the leading monarchical states of Europe. . . . Believe me to remain, faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH."

"Rydal Mount, Jany. 13, 1841.

MY DEAR MR REED,— . . . Mr. Allston and I became acquainted many years ago, through our common friend Mr. Coleridge, who had seen much of Mr. Allston when they were both living at Rome. Mr. Allston, had he remained in London, would soon have made his way to public approbation; his genius and style of painting were too much above the standard of taste, at that time prevalent, to be duly acknowledged at once by the many; but so convinced am I that he

would have succeeded in obtaining general admiration that I have often regretted his speedy return to his native country, not so much that we have lost him (for that feeling would be more than counterbalanced by what America has gained), as because while living in Europe he would have continued to be more in the way of the works of the great masters. . . . You mention the sonnet I wrote upon Haydon's picture of the Duke of Wellington. I have known Haydon, and Wilkie also, from their contemporaneous introduction to the world as artists. . . . Haydon is bent upon coming to Rydal next summer, with a view to paint a likeness of me; not as a mere matter-of-fact portrait, but one of a poetical character, in which he will endeavour to place his friend in some favourite scene of these mountains. I am rather afraid, I own, of any attempt of this kind, notwithstanding my high opinion of his ability; but if he keeps in his present mind, which I doubt, it would be in vain to oppose his inclination. He is a great enthusiast, possessed also of a most active intellect, but he wants that submission and steady good sense which is absolutely necessary for the adequate development of power in that art to which he is attached.

As I am on the subject of painting, it may be worth while to add that Pickersgill came down last summer to paint a portrait of me for Sir Rt. Peel's gallery at Drayton Manor. It was generally thought here that this work was more successful as a likeness than the one he painted some years ago for St. John's College at the request of the Master and Fellows.

There has recently been published in London a volume of some of Chaucer's tales and poems modernised; this little specimen originated in what I attempted with *The Prioress' Tale*, and if the book should find its way to America you will see in it two further specimens from myself. I had no further connection with the publication than by making a present of

these to one of the contributors. Let me, however, recommend to your notice *The Prologue* and *The Franklin's Tale*. They are both by Mr. Horne, a gentleman unknown to me, but are—the latter in particular—very well done. Mr. L. Hunt has not failed in *The Manciple's Tale*, which I myself modernised many years ago; but, though I much admire the genius of Chaucer, as displayed in this performance, I could not place my version at the disposal of the Editor, as I deemed the subject somewhat too indelicate for pure taste to be offered to the world at this time of day. Mr. Horne has much hurt this publication by not abstaining from *The Reve's Tale*. This, after making all allowance for the rude manners of Chaucer's age, is intolerable; and, by indispensable softening down the incidents, he has killed the spirit of that humour, gross and farcical, that pervades the original. When the work was first mentioned to me, I protested as strongly as possible against admitting any coarseness or indelicacy, so that my conscience is clear of countenancing aught of that kind. So great is my admiration of Chaucer's genius, and so profound my reverence for him . . . for spreading the light of Literature through his native land, that, notwithstanding the defects and faults in this publication, I am glad of it, as a means for making many acquainted with the original, who would otherwise be ignorant of everything about him but his name. . . . —Ever faithfully and gratefully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH."

"May 15, 1841.

MY DEAR MR. REED,—I am now on a visit, along with Mrs. Wordsworth and our friend Miss Fenwick, to Miss F.'s brother-in-law, Mr. Popham, who lives in the rich and beautiful vale of Taunton, in Somersetshire. It is six weeks since we left home, and your letter of the 14th April was duly forwarded to me at Bath, where we have been residing for about a month. . . ."

“ *Rydal Mount, August 16, 1841.*

MY DEAR MR. REED,— . . . It appears to me next to impossible that peace can long be preserved in your country. Your government, I fear, is too feeble; nor will your tumultuous democracy, I apprehend, be reconciled to subordination till war, either foreign or civil, or perhaps both, has taught them the necessity of it.

. . . Do you know Miss Peabody of Boston? She has just sent me, with the highest eulogy, certain essays of Mr. Emerson. Our Carlyle and he appear to be what the French used to call ‘*esprits forts*,’ though the French idols showed their spirit after a somewhat different fashion. Our two present philosophers, who have taken a language which they suppose to be English for their vehicle, are verily *Par nobile Fratrum*. . . .—Ever faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.”

“ *Rydal Mount, March 1, 1842.*

MY DEAR SIR,— . . . I have sent you three sonnets upon certain ‘*Aspects of Christianity in America*,’ having, as you will see, a reference to the subject upon which you wished me to write. I wish they had been more worthy of the subject; I hope, however, you will not disapprove of the connection, which I have thought myself warranted in tracing between the Puritan fugitives and Episcopacy. The sonnets are already printed, and will be published, I hope, before I can receive an answer to this letter, in a new volume of poems which I am carrying through the press. They are miscellaneous, but will contain the Tragedy of which you have heard something. It was written so far back as 1795-6.

By the same packet I shall send a copy of those sonnets to Bishop Doane. . . .—Your much obliged,

WM. WORDSWORTH.”

“ Rydal Mount, July 18, 1842.

MY DEAR SIR,— . . . I have just resigned the office which to my own great convenience and advantage I have held for nearly 30 years, in favour of my younger son, who had acted under me for more than 11 years. By this step my small income has been reduced more than one-half, for there is no truth in what you may have seen in the newspapers that ‘ I had retired upon a pension.’

I lately received from Mr. Dickens a printed circular letter, in which he states that, having presented through M Clay a petition to Congress, signed by the whole body of American authors, praying for the establishment of an international law of Copyright—to counteract this petition, as the circular states, a meeting was held at Boston, at which a memorial against any change in the existing state of things was agreed to, with but one dissentient voice. This document, which was received, deliberately stated that if English authors were invested with any control over the republication of their own books, it would be no longer possible for American editors to alter and adapt them (as they do now) to the American taste.

Thus far the circular. And I ask you if it be possible that any person of the lowest degree of respectability in Boston could sign a document in its spirit so monstrous, and so injurious in its tendency ?

. . . I returned to Rydal a month ago, after having been nearly six weeks in London. . . . The book trade is in a most depressed state—nothing but such books as have a connection with Theology, and the religious ferment that originated in Oxford, seeming to have the power of inducing people to part with their money for literature’s sake. Nor is this much to be wondered at, for all ranks and classes are compelled by difficulties in the state of things to reduce their expenditure. . . .—Your much obliged friend,

WM. WORDSWORTH.”

“ Rydal Mount, Sept. 14, 1842.

MY DEAR MR. REED,—. . . A few days ago, after a very long interval, I returned to poetical composition; and my first employment was to write a couple of sonnets upon subjects recommended by you to take place in the ecclesiastical series. They are upon the marriage ceremony. . . .”

“ Rydal Mount, March 27, 1843.

MY DEAR MR. REED,—. . . The account you give of my old friend Mr. Allston was very gratifying to me. As I believe you know, we were made acquainted through Mr. Coleridge, who had lived in much intimacy with Mr. Allston at Rome. There is a most excellent portrait of Coleridge by Allston, about which I am very anxious, not knowing what will become of it; the late owner, Mr. Wade, for whom it was painted, being dead. My wish was, as I expressed to him a year and a half ago, that he should bequeath the portrait to Mr. Coleridge's only daughter for her life; to go, after her day, to the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, or the College in that University where he was educated. But I have no knowledge that he acted upon this advice. His own inclination was to send the picture to the painter. I suspected that inclination, and was well aware that Mr. Allston would prize it much for his deceased friend's sake. I knew also that Mr. Coleridge had many ardent admirers in America. Nevertheless I could not suppress a wish that it should remain in England; it is so admirable a likeness of what that great and good man then was, both as to person, features, air, and character; and, moreover, though there are several pictures of him in existence, and one by an artist eminent in his day—viz. Northcote—there is not one in the least to compare to that by Mr. Allston.

You give me pleasure by the interest you take in the various passages in which I speak of the poets, my contem-

poraries who are no more. Dear Southey, one of the most eminent, is just added to the list a few days ago. I went over to Keswick to attend his remains to their last earthly abode. For upwards of a year and a half his powers of recognition—except very rarely, and but for a moment—have been all but extinct. His bodily health was grievously impaired, and his medical attendant says that he must have died long since, but for the very great strength of his natural constitution. As to his literary remains they must be very considerable, but, except his epistolary correspondence, more or less unfinished. His letters cannot but be very numerous; and, if carefully collected, and judiciously selected, will, I doubt not, add greatly to his reputation. He had a fine talent for that species of composition, and took much delight in throwing off his mind in that way. Mr. Taylor, the dramatic author, is his literary executor.

. . . I will add a few words upon the wish you express that I would pay a tribute to the English poets of past ages, who never had the fame they are entitled to, and have long been almost entirely neglected. Had this been suggested to me earlier in life, or had it come into my thoughts, the thing in all probability would have been done. At present I cannot hope it will, but it may afford you some satisfaction to be told that in the MS. poem upon my poetic education there is a whole book of about 600 lines upon my obligation to writers of imagination, and chiefly the poets, though I have not expressly named those to whom you allude, and for whom and many others of their age I have a high respect. The character of the schoolmaster, about whom you inquire, had, like the Wanderer in *The Excursion*, a solid foundation in fact and reality, but, like him, it was also in some degree a composition. I will not, and need not, call it an invention—it was no such thing; but were I to enter into details I fear it would impair the effect of the whole upon

your mind, nor could I do it at all to my own satisfaction. I send you, according to your wish, the additions to the ecclesiastical sonnets, and also the last poem from my pen. I threw it off two or three weeks ago, being in a great measure impelled to it by the desire I felt to do justice to the memory of a heroine, whose conduct presented some time ago a striking contrast to the inhumanity with which our countrymen shipwrecked lately upon the French coast have been treated.—Ever most faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

I must request that *Grace Darling* may not be reprinted."

"*Rydal Mount, August 2, 1843.*

MY DEAR MR. REED,— . . . This spring I have not left home for London or anywhere else, and during the progress of it, and the summer, I have had much pleasure in noting the flowers and blossoms, as they appeared and disappeared successively,—an occupation from which, at least with reference to my own grounds, a residence in town for the three foregoing spring seasons cut me off. Though my health continues, thank God, to be very good, and I am active as most men of my age, my strength for very long walks among the mountains is of course diminishing; but, weak or strong in body, I shall ever remain in heart and mind your friend,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

P.S.—Mr. Southey's literary executors are making a collection of his letters, which will prove highly interesting to the public, they are so gracefully and feelingly written."

"*Rydal Mount, Nov. 10, 1843.*

MY DEAR MR. REED,— . . . Of the ability of the State of Pennsylvania to discharge its obligation there can be no doubt. As Mr. Webster has told them, theirs is one of the richest countries in the world, so that the whole resolves itself into a question of morality. An immense majority of the

educated inhabitants desire nothing more earnestly than that the debt should be provided for; but their opinion is overborne by the sordid mass, which will always have a considerable influence over a community whose institutions are so democratic as yours are. Were it not for this evil I should not have a shadow of doubt as to the issue; at present I own I have. Mr. Webster has spoken manfully, but why does he say so much about the great foreign capitalists, without giving a word to the very many who in humble life are stripped of their comforts, and even brought to want, by these defalcations. It is a sad return for the confidence they placed in the good faith of their transatlantic brethren. I do not mean to insinuate that the poor creditor should be paid at the expense of the rich, far from it; but it is for that portion of the sufferers that I chiefly grieve—and I mourn even still more for the disgrace brought upon, and the discouragement given to, the self-government of nations by the spread of the suffrage among the people. For I will not conceal from you that, as far as the people are capable of governing themselves, I am a Democrat.

. . . Immediately upon the receipt of yours I wrote to a friend at Bristol to do what could be done for the fulfilment of Mr. Allston's and my own wishes in respect to the portrait. To that letter I have not yet received an answer. The portrait belongs, I believe, to a nephew or niece of the late Mr. Wade, for whom it was painted.

Thanks for your criticism upon the sonnet; let it be altered as you suggest, "for rightly were they taught," etc. This is a dry letter. . . .—Believe me to remain, ever truly and faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH."

CHAPTER XLI.

THE QUESTION OF COPYRIGHT.

THE subject of copyright had a special interest to Wordsworth. He believed in the natural right of authors in their literary productions, and presented a petition to Parliament on the subject. Serjeant Talfourd, who introduced a Bill on Copyright into the House of Commons, had many conferences with him, both beforehand and during the progress of the measure. Wordsworth's own correspondence on the question, with some of the most eminent of his contemporaries, has a literary interest still, notwithstanding the advance of opinion during the fifty years that have intervened. He corresponded on the Bill, and on the general subject, with Sir Robert Peel and Lord Adair, with Mr. W. E. Gladstone, Sir Robert Inglis, Travers Twiss, Richard M. Milnes (afterwards Lord Houghton), Edward Horsman, Samuel Rogers, E. Irton, E. Stanley, Thomas Aglionby, A. Dalrymple, R. N. Price, H. C. Robinson, J. W. Liddell, Frederick Pollock, W. James, C. Cresswell, Matthias Attwood, W. Johnston, Philip H. Howard, Sir W. Rowan Hamilton, and others. Much of his correspondence with these persons is extremely interesting; and the reason why the opinions of eminent men amongst Wordsworth's contemporaries upon this subject are still valuable is that the question of copyright is not yet settled. It is a subject of perennial interest, alike to authors, and publishers, and the public.

Rather than discuss the general question, or criticise the opinions advanced upon it by these correspondents, I prefer to state them, for the benefit of others.

Wordsworth's own case was referred to by Serjeant Talfourd, when introducing his measure into the House of Commons on the 18th of May 1839, in the following words :—

“Let me suppose an author of true original genius, disgusted with the inane phraseology which had taken the place of poetry, and devoting himself from youth to its service, disdaining the superficial graces which attract the careless, and unskilled in the moving accidents of fortune, not sailing in the tempest of the passions, but in the serenity which lies above them ; whose works shall be scoffed at by fools, whose name made a by-word, yet who shall persevere in his high and holy cause, gradually impressing thoughtful minds with the perception of truths made visible in the severest forms of beauty, until he shall gradually create the taste by which he shall be appreciated—influence one or other of the master-spirits of his age—be felt pervading every part of the national literature—softening, raising, and enriching it ; and, when at last he shall find his confidence in his own aspirations justified, and the name which was the scorn admitted to be the glory of his age, he shall look forward to the close of his earthly career, as the event that shall lend the last consecration to his fame, and deprive his children of the harvest he was just beginning to reap. As soon as his copyright becomes valuable, it is gone.

This is no imaginary case. I refer to one who, ‘in this setting part of time,’ has opened a vein of sentiment and thought unknown before, who has supplied the noblest antidote to the freezing effects of the scientific spirit of the age, who, while he has detected that poetry which is the essence of the greatest things, has cast a glory round the lowliest conditions of humanity, and traced out the subtle links by which they are connected with the highest—one whose name will now find an echo, not only in the heart of

the secluded student, but in that of the busiest of those who are fevered by political controversy—William Wordsworth.” (Loud cheers.)

Wordsworth’s own petition on the subject, and another from Thomas Carlyle, may precede a few specimens of the extensive correspondence which he carried on at this time with his contemporaries :—

“The humble petition of William Wordsworth, of Rydal, in the county of Westmoreland,

Sheweth,—

That your petitioner is on the point of attaining his seventieth year ; that since his first literary production was given to the press forty-six years have elapsed, during which time he has at intervals published various original works, down to the year one thousand eight hundred and thirty-five.

That the copyright in all these works is unassigned, but that in a great part of them, under the existing law, that exclusive right is already contingent upon the duration of his life, and the same would be the case in a very few years with much the larger portion of the remainder, including the most important of these works, a poem entitled *The Excursion*, which, in the event of his decease, would become public property in less than four years from the present time.

That the short term of copyright now allowed by the law is a grievance common to all authors whose works are not liable to be superseded ; but your petitioner takes leave respectfully to represent that this grievance falls still more heavily upon those who, like himself, have engaged and persevered in literary labour, less with the expectation of producing immediate or speedy effect than with a view to interest and benefit society, though remotely, yet permanently.

That it has happened to your petitioner, in consequence of having written with this aim, that his works, though never out

of demand, have made their way slowly into general circulation ; yet he may be permitted to state a fact bearing obviously upon the Bill for the extension of the term of copyright now before your honourable House ; that within the last four years these works have brought the author a larger pecuniary emolument than during the whole of the preceding years in which they have been before the public. This advantage would have in a great measure been lost to his family had he died a few years since.

That your petitioner ventures to submit to your honourable House his conviction that the duration of copyright, as the law now stands, is far from being co-extensive with the claims of natural affection : a hardship which will be still more apparent when the condition of distinguished authors is viewed in contrast with that of men who rise to eminence in other professions or employments, whereby they not only acquire wealth, but have patronage at command, or obtain the means of forming family establishments in business, which enable them to provide at once for their descendants, or for others who have claims upon them. He also trusts that to the wisdom of the House it will appear that the law—while it fails to pay due regard to the reasonable claims of natural affection—is also at variance, in an unwarrantable degree, with the principles that govern the right of property in all other matters (mechanical inventions and chemical discoveries only excepted), between which, however, and works in several of the highest departments of literature, there is in quality, circumstance, mode of operation, and oftentimes in origin, a broad line of distinction, as was shown when the subject in the preceding session was under the consideration of Parliament.

That in answer to the objection that the proposed measure would check the circulation of books, it may be urged, first, that to a great majority of publications the measure would be indifferent, they being adequately protected by the law as it

now is ; that the works which it would affect, though comparatively few, must be presumed to be of superior merit, and therefore to be those that most deserve or require the aid which the Bill proposes ; further, that from the daily increase of readers, through the spread of education, and the growing wealth of the community, it must become more and more the interest of the holders of the copyright to sell at a low price, and to prepare editions suitable to the means of different classes of society, and that consequently the apprehension of a prolonged privilege being injurious to the people is entitled to little or no regard.

That it is highly desirable that the printing of works should be under the control of their authors' representatives, however long those works may have been before the public, in order to secure copies correctly printed, and to preclude the sending forth books without the author's recent or last editions or emendations, by those publishers who are ready to seize upon expiring copyrights.

[In a MS. copy of this petition, transcribed by Mrs. Wordsworth, evidently at the dictation of her husband, the following was inserted at this place :—

‘ And not less important is this prolongation of copyright needful for preventing the republication of such productions as the mature judgment of their authors may have rejected, and which unconscientious publishers may push into sale by advertising their own edition as the only complete one of a deceased author's writings.’]

That finally (and to this, above all, your petitioner respectfully entreats the attention of your honourable House) the Bill has for its main object to relieve men of letters from the thralldom of being forced to court the living generation to aid them in rising above degraded taste and slavish prejudice, and to encourage them to rely upon their own impulses, or to leave them with less excuse if they should fail to do so.

That your petitioner, therefore, implores your honourable House that the Bill before it for extending the term of copyright may pass into a law ; a prayer which he makes in full faith that in this, as in all other cases, justice is capable of working out its own expediency." *

The following was Carlyle's petition :—

" To the Honourable the Commons in England of Parliament assembled, the petition of Thomas Carlyle, a Writer of Books,

Humbly sheweth,

That your petitioner has written certain Books, being incited thereto by various innocent or laudable considerations, chiefly by the thought that said books might in the end be found to be worth something.

That your petitioner had not the happiness to receive from Mr. Thomas Tegg, or any Publisher, Republisher, Printer, Bookseller, Book-buyer, or other the like man or body of men, any encouragement or countenance in writing of said books, or to discern any chance of receiving such ; but wrote them by effort of his own, and the favour of Heaven.

That all useful labour is worthy of recompense ; that all honest labour is worthy of the chance of recompense ; that the giving and assuring to each man what recompense his labour has actually merited may be said to be the business of all Legislation, Polity, Government, and Social Arrangement whatsoever among men ; a business indispensable to attempt, impossible to accomplish accurately, difficult to accomplish without inaccuracies that become enormous, insupportable,

* *Three Speeches delivered in the House of Commons in favour of a Measure for an Extension of Copyright*, by T. N. Talfourd, Serjeant-at-Law. To which are added the Petitions in favour of the Bill, and Remarks on the present state of the Copyright Question. London : Edward Moxon, Dover Street. 1840.

and the parent of Social Confusions which never altogether end.

That your petitioner does not undertake to say what recompense in money this labour of his may deserve; whether it deserves any recompense in money, or whether money in any quantity could hire him to do the like.

That the law does at least protect all persons in selling the production of their labour at what they can get for it, in all market-places, to all lengths of time. Much more than this the law does to many, but so much it does to all, and less than this to none.

That your petitioner cannot discover himself to have done unlawfully in this his said labour of writing books, or to have become criminal, or have forfeited the law's protection thereby. Contrariwise, your petitioner believes firmly that he is innocent in said labour; that if he be found in the long-run to have written a genuine enduring book, his merit therein, and desert towards England, and English and other men, will be considerable, not easily estimable in money; that, on the other hand, if his book proves false or ephemeral, he and it will be abolished and forgotten, and no harm done.

That, in this manner, your petitioner plays no unfair game against the world; his stake being life itself, so to speak (for the penalty is death by starvation), and the world's stake nothing till it sees the dice thrown; so that in any case the world cannot lose.

That in the happy and long-doubtful event of the game's going in his favour, your petitioner submits that the small winnings thereof do belong to him or his, and that no other mortal has justly either part or lot in them at all, now, henceforth, or forever.

May it therefore please your Honourable House to protect him in said happy and long-doubtful event; and (by passing your Copyright Bill) forbid all Thomas Teggs and other

extraneous persons, entirely unconcerned in this adventure of his, to steal from him his small winnings, for a space of sixty years at shortest. After sixty years, unless your Honourable House provide otherwise, they may begin to steal.

And your petitioner will ever pray,

THOMAS CARLYLE."

A letter from Serjeant Talfourd to Wordsworth, dated from the Temple, 22d November 1837, refers both to his own Bill on Copyright, and to a project for publishing his friend's Poems connected with the Continental Tour of 1820, along with Dorothy Wordsworth's Journal of that tour :—

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am greatly obliged and honoured by your letter, which will be of great service to me in the event of a serious opposition to my Bill. I have given notice of a motion for leave to introduce it on 14th December, which I expect to be granted without the necessity of my exhausting my resources by making a speech, and without discussion. The second reading—on which I presume any opposition the followers of Mr. Tegg may design will be given—cannot take place till after Christmas. I think it will be very useful, if Mr. Southey will, when sufficiently recovered from his loss, use his influence with his Parliamentary friends to support it.

I am sure your admirers—now happily embracing all who love English poetry for its own sake—will see with unmingled pleasure the republication of your poems in the setting of Miss Wordsworth's work ; and I trust no doubt on the subject will prevent us from seeing the pieces we have loved for themselves rendered more interesting by such an association.

Trusting we shall soon hear of your entire restoration to health, and receive the best and happiest proofs of your being in healthiest spirits,—I remain, my dear Sir, ever most truly yours,

T. N. TALFOURD."

Writing to his friend Rowan Hamilton early in the following year, Wordsworth referred to some matters of biographical interest, and also to the subject of copyright:—

“ *Rydal Mount, January 14, 1838.*”

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I now distinctly understand you ; and as to one of your leading points, viz. availing myself of publication through your Society, I may say that if there had been among my papers anything of the kind you wish for, I should have gladly forwarded it to you. But it is not so ; nor dare I undertake to promise anything of the kind for the future. Though prevailed upon by Mr. Coleridge to write the first *Preface* to my Poems, which tempted, or rather forced me to add a *Supplement* to it, and induced by my friendship for him to write the *Essay upon Epitaphs* now appended to *The Excursion*, but first composed for *The Friend*, I have never felt inclined to write criticism, though I have *talked*, and am daily talking, a great deal. If I were several years younger, out of friendship to you mainly, I would sit down to the task of giving a body to my notions upon the essentials of poetry—a subject which could not be properly treated without adverting to the other branches of Fine Art ; but at present, with so much before me that I could wish to do in verse, and the melancholy fact brought daily more and more home to my conviction, that intellectual labour, by its action on the brain and nervous system, is injurious to the bodily powers, and especially to my eyesight, I should only be deceiving myself, and misleading you, were I to encourage a hope that, much as I could wish to be your fellow-labourer, however humbly, I shall ever become so. . . .

There are obviously, even in criticism, two ways of affecting the minds of men : the one by treating the matter so as to

* See *Life of Sir W. Rowan Hamilton*, vol. ii. pp. 231-3.

carry it immediately to the sympathies of the many ; and the other, by aiming at a few select and superior minds, that might each become a centre for illustrating it in a popular way. Mr. Coleridge, whom you allude to, acted upon the world to a great extent through [the latter of] these processes ; and there cannot be a doubt that your Society might serve the cause of just thinking, and pure taste, should you, as President of it, hold up to view the desirableness of first conveying to a few, through that channel, reflections upon Literature and Art, which, if well meditated, would be sure of winning their way directly, or in their indirect results, to a gradually widening circle.

.

You are right in your recollection that I named to you the subject of foreign piracy as injurious to English authors, and I may add now that if it could be put a stop to, I believe that it would rarely happen that successful writers, in works of imagination and feeling at least, would stand in need of pensions from Government, or would feel themselves justified in accepting them. Upon this subject I have spoken a great deal to members of Parliament of all parties, and with several distinguished Americans. I have also been in correspondence with the present Chancellor of the Exchequer upon it, and dwelt upon the same topic in a letter which I had occasion to write to Sir Robert Peel. Mr. Lytton Bulwer, as perhaps you know, drew the attention of Parliament to it during the last session, and Lord Palmerston said, in answer to him, that the attention of Government had already been directed to the measure, and that it would not be lost sight of—or something to that purpose. I may claim some credit for my exertions in this business, and full as much or more for the pains which I have taken for many years to interest men in the House of Commons in the extension of the terms of copyright—a measure which I trust is about to be brought to a successful close by the exertions of my admirable friend Serjeant Talfourd. To him I have written upon the argument more than once. When this is

effected, I trust the other part of the subject will be taken up with spirit; and if the Foreign Secretary, in whose department the matter lies, should be remiss, I trust he will be stimulated through Parliament, to which desirable end the services of distinguished Societies like yours, and the notice of the question by men of letters, in reviews or otherwise, would greatly contribute. Good authors, if justice were done to them by their own and foreign countries, now that reading is spread and spreading so widely, would, very few of them, be in need, except through their own fault."

The letters which follow are arranged in chronological order. Those of Mr. Gladstone, Lord Houghton, and others, are printed in this biography of Wordsworth, because of the numerous allusions to the poet—to his work, his opinions, and his influence—which they contain.

T. N. Talfourd to Wordsworth.

"Shrewsbury, 21st March 1838.

MY DEAR SIR,—The second reading of the Copyright Bill stands for Wednesday, 11th April, when I shall, if possible, move it. The booksellers threaten me with a very strong opposition—and the doctrinaire party are inclined to support them;—so that we must muster all our strength. The foreign part of the measure has been taken up by the Board of Trade; and, therefore, now forms no part of my Bill. . . .

I propose boldly to meet the opposition on the question of the extended period of copyright;—for if this should be defeated, it will not be worth while to legislate for minor details. . . .—
Ever truly yours, T. N. TALFOURD."

Wordsworth to W. E. Gladstone.

"Rydal, Kendal, March 23, 1838.

MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,—Most probably I am putting

you to unnecessary trouble by this letter, which is written solely to remind you that the second reading of Serjeant Talfourd's Bill stands for Wednesday, April 11. In a letter received this morning Serjeant Talfourd tells me that the booksellers (rapacious creatures as they are) are getting up a very strong opposition to his motion, and will be supported by the Doctrinaires (who are they?—Warburton and Grote and *id genus omne*, I suppose). Upon the general merits of this question it would be presumptuous in me to enter in a letter to you. But as to my own interest in it, it may not be superfluous to say that within the last three years or so my poetical writings have produced for me nearly £1500, and that much the greatest part of them either would be public property to-morrow, if I should die, or would become so in a very few years. Is this just, or cannot a state of law which allows the possibility of such injustice be favourable to the production of solid literature, in any department of what is usually called Belles Lettres?—Ever faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

I need not say how much I would rejoice to see you at Rydal Mount."

W. E. Gladstone to Wordsworth.

"London, March 26th, 1838.

MY DEAR MR. WORDSWORTH,—I have received this morning your note of the 23d, and beginning at the wrong end, I can, with better reason, reciprocate the wish you kindly express for my appearance at Rydal Mount. I am firm and staunch in support of Talfourd's Bill, and I confidently hope we shall be able to carry him through. It may not be able to save our literature permanently, but its tendency is that way, and this should be enough. A ground not less strong I certainly recognise in the anomaly now existing, and the extreme dis-

advantage at which literary property stands, as compared with other and meaner kinds.

At present, I am looking forward to a busy week in the House of Commons, particularly on account of the question of the Negro apprenticeship; but before Serjeant Talfourd's Bill comes on, I hope to be more at leisure. This morning I had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Southey for the first time at Miss Fenwick's, which I owe to Taylor; I have not yet forgotten the obligation he imposed on me by making me known to yourself.—Believe me, my dear Sir, most sincerely yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE."

Frederick Pollock to Wordsworth.

"26th March, 1838.

As I think the present law very defective and unjust, I shall certainly support the second reading."

Travers Twiss to Wordsworth.

"London, March 28th, 1838.

The worst of it is that in these times of party excitement it is very difficult to get the calmer and higher interests of life attended to, even though they come with such a recommendation as yours."

Lt.-Gen. Sir William Gomm to Wordsworth.

"30th March 1838.

Would that my influence were a thousand times more extensive and commanding than I feel it to be—for while it is matter of high gratification to have such an appeal made to me, accompanied with expressions so flattering from such a quarter, I cannot but feel conscious at the same time that you do me no more than justice in believing that I have nothing else at heart than the advancement of sound Literature, and the prosperity of those to whom we owe its development; and

although I feel assured that Burke's estimate of some services in which he had borne a part (and a very large one) in rendering to the State 'that between money and such services there is no common measure of comparison; they are quantities incommensurable' applies with a ten-fold force in the case here adduced—inasmuch as the services here rendered are for *all* States, and for *all* Time—still, there has always appeared to me something monstrous in the existing relation between author, and bookseller, or publisher, as regards remuneration of this sort; a positive reversing of the natural order of things, as we find it obtains in all matters else; a subservience *pro tanto* of the spiritual to the material."

Richard M. Milnes to Wordsworth.

"26 Pall Mall, March 30.

MY DEAR SIR,—If Talfourd's Bill comes on on Wednesday the 11th, I will take care to be in my place, and bring down any friends I can. I hear both booksellers and printers are sworn against it, and that there will not be wanting in the House supporters of an opposition to it, among those who in their ignorant assertions of individual independence dislike any reciprocal obligations between parent and posterity.

I hope to lay a small volume of poems at your feet before many weeks are over, and shall take your criticism as kinder than your praise.—Believe me, my dear Sir, your obedient and obliged,

RICHARD M. MILNES."

Francis Lloyd to Wordsworth.

"Birmingham, April 4th, 1838.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am in receipt of your letter of 2d April. The Bill of S^t Talfourd is undoubtedly a means of rendering tardy justice to authors.

Free Trade is all very plausible when Reciprocity is its basis. If booksellers cannot produce *Excursions* themselves, they must pay a proportionate duty.

You may depend upon me using any little means in my way to draw members' attention to the second reading of this Bill. From a letter I had from John a day or two ago, I expect he will be a candidate for the head-mastership of King Edward's Grammar School in this town, vacant by Dr. Jen's advancement to the Deanery of Jersey. His location here would afford us all much pleasure.—I am, my dear Sir, yours very sincerely,

FRANCIS LLOYD."

Henry Crabb Robinson to Wordsworth.

"This is a very short note to send so long a distance, but I have no lighter matter to fill up with. I saw Moxon the other day. He is going on with the Sonnets. As others do not concur with me in the objection to a thick volume of Sonnets, I do not persist in mine. It will probably be my travelling companion in every future journey I take. I wish there were not six, but six-score, new ones. I wish it had occurred to me in time to draw up for your consideration a scheme of arrangement of which something of this kind would have been the rule:—

1.
La bella natura.

2.
Place.

3.
The Church.

4.
Political.

5.
Moral.

I do not mean precisely this, but in this way. Of the Copyright Bills I hear nothing new. I have written a jocular letter to Milnes, urging him to follow the example of Lord Grey, who said that whenever the contest should arise between the patricians and the plebeians, he would abide by his order. So must he (Milnes), in the great conflict between publishers and poets, presume to take his station among the poets.

That otherwise the Muses will have to look mainly to the Rads—not natural allies, I hope.

There is little Lord John, not only Ministerial leader, but Parliamentary Musagetes, backed by Talfourd and Bulwer;* and on the Conservative side only Ben—the defender of the impenitent thief on the Cross across Dan O'Connell's genealogy!!!

Seriously speaking, if you keep but Sir Robert Inglis and get Peel, your Bill is in no danger.

Of *personalia* none for the present.—Affectionate regards, etc., etc., etc.

5th April 1838.

H. C. ROBINSON."

T. N. Talfourd to Wordsworth.

"*Temple, 16th April 1838.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I am sorry you should have been annoyed about a thing so foreign to your habits as a petition. It was only a casual thought of mine; and I own on reflection I think it would be more dignified to rest the case on the simple grounds of justice—only referring to individual cases as illustrative of the principle. Do not, therefore, trouble yourself further on the subject.

The low selfishness of the Publishers, and their inducing the poor printers and their devils to fancy that their trade will be destroyed, provokes me almost to expose some of them. But I shall forbear. Only think of ——, who has swindled —— out of the life of ——, and is proposing to pay his creditors (poor authors among them) some 5d. in the pound, being one of the loudest in opposition to a measure which may give some *possible* benefit to the most meritorious of the class he has thus injured! There are —— and ——, again, who have made £16,000 by the —— ——, while the author has only received £2000—actually enriched by him—petitioning against it. It is too bad. And the *Times* setting

* I should have added the new Greenwich Pensioner.

up a bookseller's hack named —— as the representative of authors, when the editor knows that every author of eminence —yourself, Southey, Campbell, Moore, Bulwer, Herschell, the family of poor Sir Walter, Miss Martineau, Miss Mitford, Babbage: in short, every author of any repute—is most anxious that the bill should pass. I am afraid we shall be beaten; but, for my own poor part, I shall be nobly overpaid by the recollection of having attempted to obtain some portion of justice for one to whom I owe as great a debt of gratitude as can be owed by one human being to another.—With kind remembrances to Mrs. Wordsworth, I remain, my dear Sir, ever faithfully yours,

T. N. TALFOURD."

Edward Horsman to Wordsworth.

"Newbury, April 19.

. . . I have intended from the first to give that Bill every support in my power: and if it went even further in securing the rights of authors, I should support it still more cordially. If, by adopting this course, I am also promoting an object in which you take an interest, I assure you it will add much to the satisfaction with which I shall give my vote; for though we *do* differ, as you remind me, in politics, yet on other and more grateful subjects—

Sympathies there are
More tranquil, yet perhaps of kindred birth,
That steal upon the meditative mind,
And grow with thought.

And on these there may be a sufficient community of feeling and sentiment between us to allow of all minor differences being forgotten, and ensure any communication you may have to make me being received with the honour due to the Poet, without his being remembered as a politician, or admitted as a stranger. I, at least, cannot be so ungrateful as to yield the

latter title to him with whose thoughts it was my delight to become familiar

In days unruffled by the gale
Of public news or private ;

and to which, even now, when I have launched my bark on the distempered flood of public life, I am wont to recur with more constancy and pleasure than to those of any other author, and ever find in them ‘a power to virtue friendly.’

If I have said more in answer to your letter than you may think it called for, I have only one excuse to make. As the representative of your native town, I might claim some privilege of speech ; but more than that, when the author of *The Excursion* apologises as being unknown to one who has most of what he has given to the world by heart, he must not be surprised that the latter should in return avail himself of the only opportunity he may ever have of thanking him for all he has owed him, and more than he can ever repay.—Believe me to be, Sir, with much respect, your very obedient and faithful servant,

EDWARD HORSMAN.”

Sir Robert H. Inglis to Wordsworth.

“*Milton Bryan, April 23d, 1838.*

MY DEAR MR. WORDSWORTH,— . . . I do not personally anticipate any unfavourable result to a measure brought into the House of Commons partly by Mr. Spring Rice, and partly by Lord Mahon and myself, as well as by Mr. Serjeant Talfourd, inasmuch as, by the very force of names, it is proved to be no party measure ; and yet it has a support on the Treasury Bench, which will make its rejection discreditable to the Government. Spring Rice ought not to put his name to any Bill which his colleagues are prepared to oppose. . . . The only danger, in fact, which I anticipate is from our security of success ; but in consequence of your letter I have written a

private note to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the one side, and to Sir Thomas Fremantle on the other. . . . It is, of course, possible that a combination of Hume and Warburton and the three or four other doctrinaires in the House with a posey of Radicals under Mr. Wakley, may take us by surprise; but I think that the above letters, if received by the parties, ought to defend us from such a result; and in fair fighting, in a full House, I do not think that we can be defeated.—Believe me always, my dear Sir, most faithfully yours,

ROBERT H. INGLIS."

T. N. Talfourd to Wordsworth.

"*Temple, 23d April 1838.*

MY DEAR SIR.—Accept my warmest thanks for your most kind and encouraging letter, and for your permission to publish it. I have thought it so important to our cause at this crisis, not only as giving your high sanction to the measure, but as explaining the grounds on which authors forbear to petition that I have, through Mr. Moxon, procured its insertion in the *Morning Post* of to-day, and send you a copy of the paper. I am most grateful for your delicious sonnet*—may you have many returns of the season which inspired it.

I preferred the *Morning Post*, both as having steadily advocated the cause of authors in this question, and as supporting political opinions akin to your own. . . .—Believe me, my dear Sir, ever faithfully yours,

T. N. TALFOURD."

T. N. Talfourd to Wordsworth.

"*House of Commons, April 30, 1838.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I am greatly obliged and delighted with your letter of to-day. . . . It did the cause great service.

* Probably the sonnet beginning—

Hark! 'tis the thrush, undaunted, undeprest.

Moxon has published my speech on the second reading of the Bill, and will be certain to send it to you. I feel Sir Robert Peel is not with us. He was in the House during my speech on Wednesday; but left it, and did not return for the division. If we do not succeed this year, we must try to simplify our measure—and I doubt not that we shall ultimately prevail—long (I hope very many years) before it would be too late to do *you* something like justice. With kind remembrances to Mrs. Wordsworth—I am, ever most truly yours,

T. N. TALFOURD."

T. N. Talfourd to Wordsworth.

*"Court of Common Pleas,
Westminster, 21st June 1838.*

MY DEAR SIR,—You will not be wholly unprepared to hear that our hopes of passing the Copyright Bill are over for this Session. It has not, however, been defeated, but withdrawn, to be introduced in its now complete state on the first day of next Session. You, I am sure, will believe that Sir Robert Inglis, Lord Mahon, and myself, did not adopt this painful course without the strongest conviction that it was the best with reference to the ultimate success of the measure. Last night was fixed for the re-committal of the Bill—which has been much altered in its details but is unchanged in principle, except that it does not now give any extension of term in cases where the author has assigned all possible interests in his work. It was the last night on which we could hope to get into committee, so as to give the Bill a chance even of passing through the House of Commons before the probable close of the Session, so that postponing it to another night would have been useless. Lord John played a wary and cunning part; he was not there, but the economists and other foes of the Bill mustered in great strength, while our friends, though they had

been urged by our excellent friend and most useful ally, Holmes, were thinly scattered over the Conservative benches.

The order of the day was not read till half-past nine—and during the evening we held several consultations—and it was not till the last moment, when, on comparing the names of members in the House with those who had voted before, we found that we must be outvoted, that we determined to yield to Mr. William Gladstone's recommendation, and withdraw in apparent possession of the field. He, therefore, as a friend of the Bill, on my moving its re-committal, rose and suggested that, in the advanced state of the Session, the passing of the Bill was hopeless, and that the wiser course would be to withdraw it till next Session. To this (as arranged) I acceded. Sir Robert Inglis concurred, and with a pledge to introduce the Bill on the first day of next Session I yielded. A defeat would have done us great mischief, a victory scarcely any good; and, therefore, with a very sad heart, I consented to that course which postpones our hopes till the commencement of the next session. As the publishers are now friendly to the measure, I cannot allow myself to doubt that if next year I introduce it as early as we propose, and take it through its stages before the business thickens, and the patience of all but the philosophic Radicals be exhausted, standing now on our majorities, we shall succeed.

I had great pleasure in reading the admirable and triumphant remarks of your long letter. I am almost ashamed to think I have enjoyed the honour of such communications as this, and have done so little to deserve them. I shall preserve it carefully, and reverently, against the time when its reasonings will again be needed.

Assuring you that I can never forsake a cause which has been graced and (to my mind at least), consecrated by the support of your genius,—I remain, my dear Sir, ever faithfully and respectfully yours,

T. N. TALFOURD."

W. E. Gladstone to Wordsworth.

"H. of C., June 21, 1838.

MY DEAR MR. WORDSWORTH.—I am most anxious that the suggestion tendered by me last night to Serjeant Talfourd, that he should postpone the Copyright Bill to the commencement of the next Session, should not create a misconception in your mind; and I will just state in a few words what reasons chiefly induced me to offer such advice, with the previous concurrence of Serjeant Talfourd, Lord Mahon, and Sir Robert Inglis. There were these three subjects taken jointly: that the House of Commons last evening was not in a favourable state, as the Radicals had mustered to support the New Zealand Bill, and oppose the Lord's Day and Copyright Bills: that you have at present, from the divisions which have taken place, an admirable Parliamentary position from which to commence operations when next we meet; and lastly, what is most important, that I believe it would have been near an impossibility to carry the Bill during the present Session. The Lords might have been expected to say, 'This is a measure which requires time for the adjustment of the several interests affected by it, and time we cannot give it amidst the crowd of measures which are pressed upon us at the fag end of the Session.' It was therefore simply upon a consideration of what was best for the *Bill* itself that it was postponed. Before next Easter I hope it will be law.

Thanks for your new sonnet in the *Quarterly*—the Haydon picture of Napoleon always reminds me of that fine stanza in Manzoni's Ode:—*

Oh! quante volte al tacito
Morir d'un giorno inerte,
Chinati i rai fulminei,
Le braccia al sen conserte,
Stette, e dei dì che furono
L' assalse il sovvenir;

* Manzoni's *Il cinque maggio*. Ode in morte di Napoleone, ll. 78-84.

Ei ripensò le mobili
 Tende, e i percossi valli,
 E il lampo dei manipoli
 E l'onda dei cavalli,
 E il concitato imperio
 E il celere obbedir.

It is, however, a very grave piece of impertinence in me to quote while writing to you;—a thought which struck me long before I had written all the lines, but half seemed as objectionable as the whole, and less intelligible. It is a different aspect of the subject from yours, but is *also* legitimate.—Believe me, with much regard, sincerely yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

Wordsworth to W. E. Gladstone.

“June [1838].

MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE, — Your decision was most judicious; and I thank you sincerely and cordially both for your exertions on this occasion, and through the whole business, and for your kind letter. The cause is at once so just, and the measure so expedient, that I have not a doubt of the principle being carried, provided those who understand the question (which they cannot do without being sensible of its importance) support it with due zeal in, and out of, Parliament. If you can point out any way in which I can be useful, I should be happy to do my best. You are perhaps aware of the reasons why Sir R. Peel withholds his support; he was so obliging as to state them in a letter to me. Perhaps it would be as well, however, if I should briefly give them. His difficulties are three.

1st. If we grant extension of right to authors, says he, how can it be withheld from applicants for patents? How can the originality of a work be defined so as to discriminate it from a plagiarism? and lastly, how can we prevent works being reprinted in countries over which we have no jurisdiction?

I answered these several objections as well as I could, and satisfactorily as I thought; but not, I fear, to Sir R.'s conviction. All these hesitations arise out of that want of due confidence in the principles of justice, which is the bane of all practised politicians.

Thanks for your animated stanzas from Manzoni. I have often heard of the ode, but it never fell in my way. You have puzzled me about a new sonnet of mine in the *Quarterly*; I presume the last number; what can it be? and how could it get there? I have *lately* written thirteen new ones, which will appear in the edition of the whole of my sonnets in *one* volume which Moxon is about to publish; but none of these were ever given by me to any writer in that review or any other."

T. N. Talfourd to Wordsworth.

"Glenarbach, 19th August 1838.

MY DEAR SIR,—Having arrived at the place where I hope to enjoy some repose and some leisure to prepare for the renewal of the battle against the enemies of the great and the permanent in literature, I trouble you with a line just to tell you where any communication from you will find me, and what I intend to do, if you approve it, preparatory to the next session. I ought, however, first to inform you how I felt and acted with respect to a most insidious measure, most unhandsomely introduced by that prince of meddlers and mischief-makers, Lord Brougham. While I was on circuit—without any communication to me or any one connected with the Copyright question by previous exertions—after our Bill, not defeated, but triumphant, had been postponed in order that its details might receive full and calm examination next year—when many of the advocates and opponents of the measure, acting on this arrangement, had paired off and left town—this sneering pamphleteriary laid a Bill on the table of the House of Lords

after a speech of three or four sentences—to which (he said) no one could object—which would meet all the evils our measure was intended to remedy—by simply vesting in the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council a power to extend the term of copyrights for a period not exceeding fourteen years.

I knew nothing of this Bill, except what I read in the newspapers; and their report exceedingly vexed and distressed me. I saw the Bill passing through its stages without remark. I had no means of communicating, except at long intervals, with the parties interested. I had paired off myself *for the session*, intending to leave town immediately on the close of the circuit, and having taken this place from the end of July, and therefore being disqualified for voting if the Bill came into the House of Commons—and I felt that it was calculated, and no doubt intended, to place the supporters of the Copyright question in a false position. On the one hand, I felt that it would be taking a great responsibility on myself to oppose a measure which *might* produce some benefit to individuals at the time—to Sir Walter's family—to Southey—and, above all, to your household;—on the other, I was convinced that if this were conceded it would be a bar to our obtaining more in our time; and that it would be a most degrading position in which to place great poets or thinkers or novelists—that of suppliants to such men as Parke, Alderson, Lord Wynford, and Lord Brougham himself, for a sort of alms rendered out of their own.

When I reached home on Friday, 5th inst., my embarrassment was not diminished; the Bill stood for a third reading on Monday;—Gladstone had left town, and I found Spring Rice decidedly for passing the Bill,—Lord Mahon and Sir Robert rather against it, and no one else knowing or caring about the matter. On Monday, Lord Lansdowne stopped the third reading—and the newspapers, to my infinite relief, told me the Bill was withdrawn—but on Tuesday I found that this was a mistake, and that Lord B. resolved to persevere. I requested Sir

Robert Inglis to see him, and learn his intentions—(for I would not seek him myself after the terms in which he had spoken of another measure of mine)—when he declared he would persevere and carry the Bill. He postponed it from night to night all the week—till Monday last, when again it stood for a third reading. On Sunday I met Lord Lansdowne at Lord Holland's; and he assured me *he* should oppose the Bill; and that it could not pass the Lords, as the lateness of the session would, in itself, be a sufficient reason with all parties. Under these circumstances, I thought myself justified, after waiting a week, in fixing my departure with Mrs. Talfourd and all the children,—who are sadly pining for country air—for Tuesday, especially as, even if the Bill were read a third time on Monday, there would not be days enough remaining of the session, unless it were unexpectedly prolonged, for the Bill to be smuggled through the House of Commons. On Monday I was in the House of Lords at its sitting—and, having been obliged to leave, returned at eight, when I found the House up, and was told by the clerk who remained that the Bill was withdrawn. The newspapers have since informed me that it was read a “third time and passed” on Monday. If this be true it must have been by trickery—for no discussion is reported, and Lord Lansdowne was resolved to oppose it. It is not, however, now important—for the Parliament, being prorogued on Monday, rendered its being passed through the Lower House impossible.

As, however, this Bill will probably be renewed next session, I am very anxious to know your feeling respecting it. I believe it to be intended by Lord Brougham for three purposes—(1) To secure to himself any credit there may be in legislating upon the question; (2) To secure to himself a power of deciding on the claims of authors, as a member of the body he proposes to empower; (3) To disarm the advocates of the larger measure of their most efficient, though not their best, arguments—of those which are supplied by existing cases—by representing

that his proposition would meet them. I propose, at all events, if not to forestall him, at least to be even with him, by introducing my measure on the first day of next session, and pressing it forward before the political business thickens; still I should wish to know your feeling respecting this Bill—as we *may* be driven to reject or adopt it.

I contemplate, subject to your judgment, to prepare and publish, and circulate among members of both Houses before next session, a little book, comprising a history of the question—my two speeches on it corrected—your letter to me (if you do not object)—the Bill, as it will be introduced, with notes on all the clauses, giving the reasons for them, and the questions which may arise on each—the grounds of the alterations it has undergone—an answer to the latest objections raised to it by Sir Edward Sugden and Lord John Russell; and finally, such notice as it may be deemed expedient to take of Lord Brougham's proceedings. I have mentioned this intention to Sir R. Inglis and Lord Mahon, and they approve it—so does Gladstone—who has permitted me to inscribe the work to him. If I proceed, will you permit me to make some extracts from your long and admirable letter to me of 17th June (that which you desired me to preserve), and also to introduce those two exquisite sonnets which add such grace to a just cause?

We arrived here on Thursday evening. . . . The exquisite beauty and repose of the place repay us already. We have a very commodious house, on a gentle slope from the Clyde, embosomed in noble trees, and backed by huge rocks to which we can ascend with ease; and the course to which, through beautiful wood-walks, affords openings of noble prospect. I am afraid there is no chance of your 'stepping westward' and northward this autumn; else I need not say how proud and happy we should be to receive you. We have taken the place for August, September, and October—and do not intend to quit till the middle of the last. Our address is Glenarbach,

West Kilpatrick, by Glasgow. With kindest remembrances to Mrs. Wordsworth and all your circle,—I remain, my dear Sir, ever gratefully and faithfully yours, T. N. TALFOURD."

T. N. Talfourd to Wordsworth.

*"3 Sergeant's Inn, Chancery Lane, London,
22d October 1838.*

MY DEAR SIR,—Your kind expression of a wish that I would look in upon you on my way home caused many 'obstinate questionings' in my mind as to the possibility of enjoying so great a pleasure. I found, however, that I could not enjoy it without leaving my children to the care of servants in a steam-packet, . . . and therefore I resigned the hope of seeing you until the spring may bring you again to us in London, as I most earnestly hope it will. On further consideration and conversation with the supporters of the Copyright Bill in Scotland, I have almost resolved to forego the scheme of publishing anything preparatory to the re-introduction of the Bill into the House of Commons, which, it being now quite easy, I shall attempt at the opening of the session. It has been urged on me that a previous publication would supply materials and excuse for the rallying and arming of the adverse forces; and I incline to think the apprehension just. On the other hand, it has been suggested that it will be well to be prepared with petitions, either singly, from each author of reputation, or jointly, to be quietly prepared, and produced on the second reading of the Bill. We might certainly thus present a formidable array of the greatest names which our age has produced, and if each author, in petitioning, would state his own individual case, the force of all combined would be the greater.

We might obtain, not merely the poets, headed by yourself, and the novelists, but many men of science, like Babbage, divines like Chalmers (whom I am glad to find a most

earnest friend of the measure), and even some eminent publishers, as Smith of Glasgow, Cadell of Edinburgh, and, I believe, all the lady writers, from Miss Martineau downwards or upwards. Will you just consider it, and let me know your feelings, which, first of all, ought by me, and by all other friends of the cause, to be regarded. If you choose to petition, I presume we might rely on Southey, and Moore, and for most others I could answer. As the prayer of the petitions would be, not for any individual benefit, but for a general measure of justice for all Authors and for all Time, I do not see any degradation in preferring them. All this, however, is matter for mature consideration; so we shall not make any general movement till Parliament meets, and then prepare to do it simultaneously, if at all.

We have had a delightful holiday in Scotland. . . . Hoping you are enjoying that health so dear and so valuable to us all,—I remain, my dear Sir, ever most truly and gratefully yours,
T. N. TALFOURD."

T. N. Talfourd to Wordsworth.

"*Sergeant's Inn, London, 24th January 1839.*

MY DEAR SIR,—As the session of Parliament is now rapidly approaching, and I propose as early as possible to move for leave to bring in the Bill to amend the law of copyright, I feel it right to trouble you with a statement of my plan, and with a request that you will afford me the assistance and the consolation of your advice, and, if you should deem the course suggested proper, that you would lend it your powerful aid. I propose, as I think I once before mentioned to you, to obtain petitions from the higher class of authors, each separately stating his own case, or so much of it as he may deem fit, stating whether his copyrights have been wholly or partially assigned, and any peculiar circumstances which may have rendered the extension of the term of copyright in his case

peculiarly desirable and just. I wrote a letter on the subject yesterday to Mr. Southey ; and, as the shortest mode of acquainting you with its purport, enclose a copy.

If *you* should feel no objection to petition, I would suggest that you should state the works of which you are the author, what property in the copyright of each you retain, the long period during which the sale was limited to a small circle, by reason either of the high aim with which they were written, or the hostility of criticism, or such other ground as you may think fitting for statement on such an occasion, and the comparative recent extension of their sale, and the tardy commencement of the ordinary rewards of industrious genius. I should not use your petition, however much I should feel encouraged by it, unless I could back it by others not wholly unworthy to attend it ; but these (so far as that character can be given to any contemporary authors) I have little doubt of obtaining. The petition should be written on parchment, should be headed 'To the Rt. Honble. the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled,' and should conclude with a prayer that the 'Hon. House will pass the Bill before it for the Amendment of the Law of Copyright.' If enclosed in a cover with 'Parliamentary Petition' inscribed on it, and addressed to me *here*, it will reach me in safety.

In the belief that Mr. Robinson is with you, I enclose a note to him, but have left it unsealed that Mrs. Wordsworth and you may read it, if he should have left you, as it relates to a subject on which you and he are still interested, poor Miss Lamb. Mr. Robinson was strongly desirous that, during her illness, she should be removed from her present residence at Edmonton, to the protection of a sister of Miss Jones, who was ready to receive her ; and the note, which is equally fit for your perusal, or for his, relates to the course I adopted, and the reason why, for the present, that purpose was suspended. . . .
—I remain, my dear Sir, ever truly and faithfully yours,

T. N. TALFOURD."

T. N. Talfourd to Wordsworth.

"Sergeant's Inn, 4th February 1839.

MY DEAR SIR,—I returned the draft of your petition without feeling any inclination to make the slightest change in it. As, however, anything which comes from your pen must have the greatest weight, I should be happy to see inserted in it two paragraphs embodying the views you say you would have liked to touch on: that the measure would affect comparatively few works, and those precisely the works which deserve and require its aid—and that the increasing number of readers will necessarily prevent any advance in the price of books. Either with or without these additions, I shall be happy to receive the Petition at your earliest convenience. . . .—I remain, my dear Sir, most truly and respectfully yours,

T. N. TALFOURD."

T. N. Talfourd to Wordsworth.

"Sergeant's Inn, 10th July 1839.

MY DEAR SIR,—You might well ask, in the few lines I had the pleasure to receive from you the other day, 'What has become of the poor Copyright Bill?' *Then* I should have replied, It is put down in the order book night after night, with the assurance of the Government that they will assist in bringing it on. *Now* I have to inform you that the state of suspense is over, and that it is postponed to next session. Notwithstanding repeated promises from Lord John Russell, and three Thursday evenings fixed when it was to have absolute precedence, it has never advanced a stage (not even a clause) since that disgraceful night when Warburton proved the infinite divisibility of matter on the body of the House of Commons. At last it became quite hopeless; and though I would have cheerfully sacrificed a portion of the circuit to any reasonable chance of carrying so great and good a measure, I could not

afford to make the sacrifice without any such prospect; and we retired at two o'clock yesterday morning to renew our battle on the first day of the next session. I am now just starting for Oxford to begin my circuit. . . .—I remain, my dear Sir, ever gratefully and affectionately yours,

T. N. TALFOURD."

T. N. Talfourd to Wordsworth.

"Russell Square, 18th August 1839.

MY DEAR SIR,—I cannot despatch the enclosed letter, which Mr. Moxon has sent to be franked, without an expression of earnest hope that you are enjoying health among your Mountains, and adding to the stores of the true and beautiful, which, whether they greatly benefit your own descendants or not, will be the inheritance of man for all time. As our efforts to obtain some portion of justice for the class of which you are the head have failed for this year, I *now* propose to publish in a little volume, got up in Moxon's best style—more for presents than for sale—my own speeches on the three chief occasions of debate—*all* the petitions for the Bill, except those which are the copies of each other—the names of all the petitioners—a little history of the Bill connecting the debates together—a statement of the treatment of the Bill night after night during this session—and an essay showing the present state of the question, and replying to the objections recently suggested—closed by your two exquisite sonnets, which you gave me leave to publish, when I contemplated such a publication last year.

I shall send a copy of this little book to every member who has ever voted in favour of the Bill, shortly before the commencement of next session; give notice of moving for leave to introduce the Bill on the first day—move and bring it in the second—and (Warburton permitting) endeavour to get it through committee before Easter;—*then* I think we must succeed, unless Lord Brougham defeats us in the Lords.

The history of the Bill during the last session will be edifying and curious, but not very creditable either to the Government or the House of Commons. It stood for discussion on three-and-twenty nights, on all of which its principal promoters, Lord Mahon, Sir Robert Inglis, and myself, attended to the last; on four of these nights (after you left) it was promised precedence by Lord John Russell, who on every occasion broke his word, or shuffled out of keeping it;—and, as if to show the injustice of preventing it from being discussed on Wednesday, it never *once*, after the fatal Wednesday when the infinite divisibility of members was tried by Warburton, came on to be discussed at all—until the further prosecution of the Bill was hopeless.

I and my household hope to depart hence to-morrow morning for North Wales—where we have a cottage in a most lovely situation—the valley which runs from Dolgelly to Barmouth skirted by Cader Idris—whence Mrs. Talfourd and I propose to glance at Ireland, after we have settled the children, and possibly to cross to Scotland, and call on you on our return to Wales. . . . With kind remembrances to Mrs. and Miss Wordsworth, your son and daughter,—I remain, my dear Sir, ever gratefully and truly yours,

T. N. TALFOURD."

T. N. Talfourd to Wordsworth.

"*Sergeant's Inn, 7th May 1840.*

MY DEAR SIR,—You will be sorry to know that I have very slender comfort in the prosecution of the Copyright Bill except the great one which arises from the honour of your association and sympathy, and the hope, however slender, of being able to serve writers who may imitate your high example. The second reading of the Bill was, as you no doubt recollect, carried before I went on circuit with a majority of two to one, under a threat from Mr. Warburton that he would oppose its committal by a motion to refer it to a Select Committee up-

stairs, which I should regard as practical defeat for the session. I fixed it for Wednesday, 8th April, and left Gloucester and my briefs, as the Assizes were not quite over, to be ready for the combat; alas! in vain, for the adjourned debate on Sir James Graham's motion intervened. I appealed to Lord John Russell to give me a Monday or Friday in vain, and took the first open Wednesday,—that was Wednesday, 29th April,—the first day after the Easter recess.

We had a good muster of our friends, but a stupid Bill, which was not expected to occupy many minutes, lasted till the hungry hour of seven; our friends dropped off to their engagements, the House trembled on the verge of *forty*, Warburton saw his advantage, and walked out, followed by some half-dozen economists, and Wakley, left behind for the purpose, counted out the House, just as the Copyright Bill was coming on. The order was then *dropped*; there was 'no House' on Thursday; on Friday, finding that the next Wednesday (last) was occupied by Lord Stanley's Bill, and the next by the Beer Bill, I was forced to Wednesday, 20th, for which my poor Bill now stands. Never was anything so unlucky. Could I have surmised the possibility of Lord Stanley's Bill being postponed, and had fixed mine for yesterday, I should have had yesterday, to-day, and every day, for some days, as the murder of Lord William Russell has postponed all political business, while Copyright might have occupied the time, and been carried or lost! But you can never advance an Order once fixed unless by special grace,—if then; so that, having fixed the 20th, I cannot avail myself of any intervening accident. I regret to say that I see no possibility of carrying the Bill this year now, though I shall still persevere to the last. . . . The most distressing feature in the case is that many of our supporters are deluded by the specious promise of a Select Committee to take evidence, which I *know* means indefinite postponement, and actual ruin; and which is absurd, for the contest is altogether one of prin-

ciple, founded on facts which are incapable of controversy, and never have been denied on either side. I am sure you have done all that can be done to procure attendance, and most successfully ; we muster well ; several members came to town on purpose for the last day fixed, but to remain dinnerless all night on the very day in all the week for dinners is too much to hope, except from such staunch friends as Inglis, Mahon, and Gladstone, who never fail. And then, our opponents never dine. Warburton is ‘in his place,’—

sedet æternumque sedebit

Infelix.

I only wonder they have never beaten us ; and believe they might have done so on Wednesday, if they had not preferred the Fabian policy.

I am very sorry to find we have no hope of seeing you here this season. Should we travel northwards in the autumn it will go hard if we do not take one glance of sweet Rydal Lake, with its Poet, and ours, and mankind’s. At present my heart is very heavy, for I am going to take my dear little boy to Eton to-morrow, and having never parted with a child, find it very hard ; and yet I am so busy I cannot indulge my feeling, which frets me more than is right. I must read a portion of *The Excursion* before I go to bed, and draw composure and support from the pure and the lasting.—With kind remembrances to Mrs. Wordsworth, ever gratefully and truly yours,

T. N. TALFOURD.”

Wordsworth to Lord Mahon.

“MY DEAR LORD MAHON,—Many thanks for your second letter, and the extracts from Lord John Russell’s to you. Public opinion having the power which it has at present, and is likely to have, I think with you that there is no likelihood of an attempt being made to hold back from republication any

valuable work whatever. Besides, Serjeant Talfourd's Bill provided against that, in a clause which, if there had been any defect in its construction, might without difficulty have been improved.

I replied briefly to the three objections which you will find in the enclosed extract from a letter Sir R. Peel was so obliging as to write to me, the only one I ever had from him on the subject ; but, in an interview with which he honoured me last summer, we had a pretty long conversation upon it, and it is remarkable that then he did not revert to any of those objections, but dwelt in general terms upon the evils of monopoly, and in particular he deprecated the mischief which might arise from confining the circulation of improved processes in science—he instanced arithmetic—to the books through which they had been first made known. I must own I thought this rather an out-of-the-way apprehension, for how would it be done ?

No combination of booksellers could now be so blind or perverse as not to be aware that, education and a taste for reading having spread so widely, and its being certain that they will spread more and more, their interest would be less promoted by selling at a low price to multitudes than at a high one to a few ; and there is in this consideration a sufficient answer to all the vague things that have been dinned into our ears on monopoly.

The observation you have made upon your present aim not precluding future improvements reconciles me to what I cannot but think an imperfect, though a prudent, measure.

In regard to posthumous works, which are often kept back that the author may bestow more labour upon them, and are therefore, if they be good, entitled to especial regard, I may be allowed to say that a boon of two years (if that be granted) in addition to twenty-eight, which the present law secures, is not

an acquisition worth thinking about. Let us, however, be thankful for what we can get, and be assured, my dear Lord Mahon, that I am duly sensible of the obligations Literature is under to you for undertaking a Bill which is sure to meet with vexatious opposition from many persons unworthy of the seats they hold in the House of Commons, and but a lax support from many others, who may have no objections either to the principles or details of your measure.—I have the honour to be, faithfully your Lordship's, WM. WORDSWORTH.

Rydal Mount, March 3d 1841."

Another correspondent, whose name has not been preserved, wrote thus to Wordsworth on the subject :—

"SIR,—It appears to me that the only persons really interested in the Copyright Act are the Authors and Publishers, and that the gist of the question is, Are the latter still to be allowed to retain the lion's share? The statement made as to the relative prices at which various works have at different times been sold (having in regard the correctness, the form, and the manner of getting up) has in truth little relation to the existence of a copyright or not, but to the rule of all trade,—*the demand*.

As well, and with as much justice, the public might complain of the relative exorbitant price paid for the few iron tanks made for the use of the Navy, when the rivet-holes were bored by hand. The tanks were found to answer the intended purpose of keeping the water sweet, and were then contracted for by the hundred. It now became worth while to invent and construct machinery to bore the rivet-holes (some hundreds in each tank) by steam-power, and the expense was not one-fortieth what it was by hand. A commensurate reduction of price took place, and what said the manufacturer? I have less profit on each tank, but that is more than compensated to me by the increased demand; I sell a greater number. It is the same with books.

To the petitions presented to Parliament by the devils and compositors I attach just the same importance as I should to petitions from slaves begging to be allowed to remain in slavery. They have done but as their task-masters bid them. The assertion that the carrying of the Copyright Bill will diminish the number, and increase the price of books, is similar to that made during the debate on the abolition of the slave trade, viz. that by doing away with slavery we should increase the price of sugar to such an extent that we should very soon have no sugar at all.

I have not a doubt it will prove equally true in respect to books as it has done to sugar.

‘It is pretty,’ as Pepys says, to see that the undisputed possession of land for twenty years gives good title to it for ever. But the undisputed possession of a copyright for twenty-eight years only entitles the owner to have it taken from him.

If this principle be a just one, I should like to know how you are to deny that the man who has held property for a longer period ought not to be deprived of it to-morrow.”

I have thought it best not to break the continuity of these letters from eminent men on the question of copyright by any remarks, explanatory or critical; but as Mr. Gladstone, in kindly sending me Wordsworth’s letters to him, after reperusing his own letters to the poet,—which by a happy accident I had found, and was able to forward to him,—has added some things, both as to his opinion of Wordsworth, and his present views on the question of copyright, extracts from these addenda may be give now.

Of the poet, Mr. Gladstone writes :—

“*Hawarden, June 10/87.*

Wordsworth used to come to me when I lived as a young man in the Albany, and my recollections of him are very pleasing. His simplicity, kindness, and freedom from the worldly type, mark their general character.”

“June 13/87.

As to copyright, looking to all the interests involved, I now think the method of Talfourd and the present law faulty, and capable of being replaced by one better for all parties.”

“June 17/87.

I was an eager supporter of Serjeant Talfourd, but have long since altered my view, and am of opinion that a more free system of copyright than the present one is possible, and would be more advantageous to the authors, the trade, and the public.”

The following fragment found amongst Wordsworth's papers, referring to Time as the only infallible judge as to the value of Literary works, may fitly close this chapter:—

It seems, therefore, only to remain for me, with the view of strengthening a cause so just, to point to and bring forth a few facts which tend to show that of good and great literature—which it is to be presumed we would all wish to see rise up among us—*Time* is the only infallible judge. Time considered for the future, and not as a fresh and light-footed stripling of a year, or a few lustrums, but with his accustomed grey locks, his wrinkled brow, his hour-glass in one hand, his destructive scythe in the other. I would also add to these insignia a sort of Pilgrim's bottle attached to the old man's body, from which he might water in his progress such of the young plants about him as he knows are destined for immortality. But printers, and publishers, and cold-blooded doctrinaires will think I am betraying the cause by taking this flight, and I must descend.

The fate and fortune of books is in many respects most remarkable. Some that on their first appearance have been extolled in Courts and by Universities and Academies, have quickly forfeited that kind of favour without ever making their way to the public, or deserving to do so. Others have

been eagerly received by the middle and humbler ranks of the community, while they were disregarded by the upper classes, and have continued to be dear to the many, though centuries perhaps may have passed away without their obtaining the sanction, except in rare instances, of those who value themselves upon a cultivated taste. Take for example *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Cowper, the poet, being prompted to speak his thought of that beautiful allegory, more than a hundred years after its publication, says in the course of his panegyric:—

I named thee not, lest so despised a name
Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame ;

and who but must be struck with the clouds that darken for a time the splendour of those productions whose merits were at first unacknowledged in the highest quarters. In Charles II.'s days ten plays of B. and F.* were acted for one of Shakespeare. Bysshe, in his *Art of Poetry*, published about the same period, writes thus of Chaucer and Spenser: "Their language has now become so antiquated and obsolete that most readers of our age have no ear for them, nor, I must confess, is the taste of Chaucer to be wondered at"; but Bysshe immediately adds, "and this is the reason that the good Shakespeare himself is not so frequently cited in this collection as he would otherwise deserve to be." In fact, he is rarely cited at all. Dryden, Cowley, Otway, Rowe, Blackmore, and Butler are the writers from which his extracts are almost exclusively taken, there being very few even from Milton. Again, books, the production of true genius sometimes, when they first appear, obtain general circulation for their faults. Such, as I have elsewhere noticed, was the case with Thomson's *Seasons*, which was admired for its sentimental flourishes and its foolish or ill-told tales—when the nobler movements of this poet's imagination were unfelt, as

* Doubtless Beaumont and Fletcher.

they seemed not to have been till a critic directed attention to them forty years afterwards. The fate of Dr. Johnson's *Rambler* is not to be overlooked. In his concluding Number he thus expresses himself: "I am far from supposing that the cessation of my performances will raise any enquiry, for I have never been much a favourite with the public." He then proceeds to give some high-minded reasons why he does not complain of neglect, and to show that he did not obtain immediate favour because he seldom descended to the arts by which it is obtained. Yet I well remember that forty-five years ago an intelligent bookseller, contrasting the slow progress to public notice made by the *Rambler* compared with its rival periodical papers, the *Adventurer* and the *Idler*, observed that editions of the *Rambler* were constantly called for, while the other two lighter works, which were popular on their first appearance, could scarcely float at all except by the aid of collections. . . . When it was thought expedient for the sake of his (Johnson's) health—declining through age and his depressed spirits—he should travel abroad, his friends might have been spared the necessity of applying to Government in his behalf, and escaped the mortification of being refused. This, by-the-by. I have endeavoured to show that Time is the only judge in Literature that can be absolutely depended upon. . . .

CHAPTER XLII.

REMINISCENCES—DOMESTIC INCIDENTS—AND LETTERS,
1838-1840.

THE relationship which Wordsworth sustained toward one of the most distinguished literary men of his time—Walter Savage Landor—has been a good deal misunderstood. It was a chequered relationship—extremely cordial and appreciative at one time, and again overshadowed by cloud, and by a misunderstanding that was perhaps mutual. As in the case of other contemporaries, it may be as well to bring together some facts in reference to it extending over a series of years, rather than break up the narrative by referring each particular to its own year; and we must go back as far as the year 1817 in order to understand it.

In that year—two years after Landor had gone to reside in Italy—Southey sent out to him copies of *The White Doe of Rylstone* and *The Excursion*. In acknowledging receipt of them Landor said he would have given eighty pounds out of his pocket if Wordsworth had not written the line in his dedication of *The Excursion*—

Of high respect and gratitude sincere.

In writing home from Pisa to his old schoolfellow Birch, he told him of a Latin essay he was writing, and of the eulogy of Wordsworth which it would contain.

Southey kept sending him out his friend's poems (*Peter Bell* and the *Duddon Sonnets* in 1820). He replied, "In whatever Wordsworth writes there is admirable poetry;

but I wish he had omitted all that precedes 'There was a time,' in *Peter Bell*. The first poet that ever wrote was not a more original poet than he is, and the best is hardly a greater." Mr. Forster (Landor's biographer) tells us that the latter had "planned a Latin essay supplementary to the treatise prefixed to his Latin poems"; and Landor told Southey, "I have finished my translation of Wordsworth's criticisms, saying in the preface that I had taken whatever I wanted from him with the same liberty as a son eats and drinks in his father's house."* Wordsworth wrote to Landor in September 1821, and told him "*The Excursion* is proud of your approbation." . . . Again he said, "It could not but be grateful to be praised by a poet who has written verses of which I would rather have been the author than of any produced in our time."

Landor's original intention was to dedicate his *Imaginary Conversations* to Wordsworth. The dedication had been offered, and accepted; but, as Landor afterwards told Southey, he had written in them conversations "with such asperity, and contemptuousness of the people in power," that a sense of delicacy would not permit me to place Wordsworth's name before the volume. The book was published in London in February 1824, and in December Wordsworth added a postscript to a letter from Southey to Landor—who was still in Italy—thanking him for the dialogues, which he called "a great acquisition to literature." Landor was much gratified. Everything that either Wordsworth or Southey wrote seems to have been sent out by the latter to Florence; and Landor sent "an overflowing return in kind" from Italy.

In the autumn of 1835 Landor came to England, and in the following summer, when Wordsworth went up to town expressly to hear and see the performance of Talfourd's

* *Life of Walter Savage Landor*, p. 203.

Ion, they met, with many others, at Talfourd's house. Southey's absence, owing to home-sorrow at Keswick, was lamented by all; but Landor fancied Wordsworth's remarks on Southey to be ungenerous. Soon afterwards he published his *Satire on Satirists*, containing a bitter attack on Wordsworth for this imaginary disrespect to Southey. He never quite got over this feeling. In 1837 he amused himself by parodying *We are Seven*; and in a new series of *Imaginary Conversations* he introduced one between Porson and Southey, in which his satire of the author of the *Lyrical Ballads* was carried still further. His fondness for reciting his own poetry is referred to, and its "summer murmur of fostering modulation"; but at the close he speaks again with appreciative justice, and says that no man had "ever such a mastery over Nature in her profoundest relations to Humanity."

Passing from Landor to Bentley, Wordsworth's opinion of the *Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris* is noteworthy. Writing to his friend Alexander Dyce on the 23d December 1837, he said: "How much do I regret that I have neither learning nor eyesight thoroughly to enjoy Bentley's masterly *Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris*. Many years ago I read the work with infinite pleasure. As far as I know, or rather am able to judge, it is without a rival in that department of literature; a work of which the English nation may be proud, as long as acute intellect, and vigorous powers, and profound scholarship shall be esteemed in the world."

Writing to Moxon in February 1838, Wordsworth speaks of requests which had reached him for a collection of his sonnets in one volume. He alludes to the number of these sonnets, 415, and says, if each sonnet were in one page, it would be "a book of luxury," not for the multitude; and adds, "A day or two ago Dr. Arnold showed me a letter from a clergyman, an accomplished scholar besides, entreating me to publish my works in 'brown paper'—that was the word—

meaning, I suppose, the cheapest form, for the benefit of readers in the humblest condition of life; being convinced from his own experience, that my works were fitted to touch their hearts, and purify and exalt their minds. These were not his words exactly, but they were to this effect. Miss Martineau, I am told, has said that my poems are in the hearts of the American people. That is the place I would fain occupy among the people of these islands; and I am not at all sure that the abstract character of a small portion of my own poetry would at all stand in the way of that result, though it would not of itself recommend them to the mass of the people. . . .

I leave the mode of publication entirely to your superior judgment, being persuaded that whatever there may be in these or my other works fitted for general sympathy, *that* will find its way, as education spreads, to the spirits of many. I ought to add, as a personal motive for preparing a volume printed as you recommend, that it will gratify my daughter, whom I am always happy and proud to please; and before you decide as to type and shape of page, would you take the trouble to communicate with her, and send a specimen to No. 3 Clarence Lane, Dover.—Very sincerely yours,

W. W."

The following are extracts from other letters to Moxon in 1838:—

"*May* 1838.

. . . The extension of the term of copyright, whatever becomes of the principle during this session, being both just and expedient, is sure of being carried sooner or later. In the meanwhile, by being the single exception among publishers who have united to oppose it, you have done yourself great honour, and acted to your advantage also, depend upon it. . . . [He refers to Talfourd's speech on copyright, and adds,] He is an astonishing man for talents, genius, and energy of mind."

“July 28, 1838.

I have been wandering for more than a month in the counties of Durham and Northumberland, and am now fixed at home for, I trust, a long time. . . . *The Examiner* drolly enough says that a sonnet on the ballot, his favourite hobby, damns the volume.”*

In 1838, Julius Charles Hare, the Archdeacon of Lewes, dedicated the second edition of his *Guesses at Truth* to Wordsworth. After expressing his personal debt to the poet, he says: “Many will join in my prayer that health of body and mind may be granted to you to complete the noble work which you have still in store, so that men may learn more worthily to understand and appreciate what a glorious gift God bestows on a nation, when He gives them a poet.”

Hare was the editor of the *Philological Museum*, printed at Cambridge, to which, in 1832, Wordsworth contributed his translation of part of the First Book of the *Æneid*.

In volume I. of this Memoir reference was made to John Thelwall, the democrat, and Wordsworth’s knowledge of him in the Alfoxden days. In a letter addressed by the poet to his widow, dated November 16th (the year is not given, but it evidently belongs to 1838), the following occurs:—

“MADAM,— . . . Circumstances were not favourable to much intercourse between your late husband and myself. I became acquainted with him during a visit which he made to Mr. Coleridge, who was then residing at Nether Stowey. . . . Your impression is correct that I, in company with my sister and Mr. Coleridge, visited him at his pleasant abode on the banks of the Wye. Mr. Southey was not of the party, as you suppose.

After the year 1798, I do not recollect having had any intercourse with Mr. Thelwall, till he called upon me at Gras-

* The *Examiner* said so high was the quality of the rest of the volume, that this “absurd” sonnet was a “profanation.”

mere on his way to Edinburgh, whither he was going to give lectures upon elocution. This must have been some time between 1801 and 1807, and I once called upon *him* in London. After that time I think I never saw him. . . .

Whether Mr. Thelwall wrote much poetry or not, I am ignorant, but I possess a small printed volume of his, containing specimens of an epic poem, and several miscellaneous pieces. . . . Mr. Coleridge and I were of opinion that the modulations of his blank verse were superior to that of most writers in that metre. . . . —With best wishes I remain,
Madam, sincerely yours, WM. WORDSWORTH."

Some time ago I received from Mr. Browning three letters, written by Wordsworth to Mrs. Browning, when she was Miss Barrett. They have no special interest, beyond the fact that they were written by him, and were addressed to her; but the remembrance of Browning's own poem *Memorabilia* induces us to record the first meeting of original minds, and the points even of slightest contact between them. Mr. Browning wrote of these letters thus:—

"19 *Warwick Crescent, W.*, Aug. 10, '85.

DEAR PROFESSOR KNIGHT.—Now that I have found the letters, of which all my knowledge was that they somewhere existed, they prove to be so unimportant and uncharacteristic of anything but the writer's good nature, that I can hardly think you will care to make use of them.

This is, however, your affair, mine being simply to redeem my promise of submitting them to you, which is done accordingly. . . .—Believe me, ever truly yours,

ROBERT BROWNING."

The first of the letters is addressed to Miss Barrett's cousin, John Kenyon, and the other two to herself. They are as follows:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have been so much pleased with

the power and knowledge displayed in Miss Barrett's vol. of poems which you were so kind as to send Mr. W. some time ago, that I am desirous to see her translation of *Æschylus*.^{*} Would you send me a copy through Mr. Moxon, and tell me also where it is to be bought, as two of my acquaintances wish to purchase it?

We hear of you through that kindest of creatures, H. Robinson, but not a word about your coming down, as you had given us leave to hope you might have done, but on the contrary that you are going off with your brother. A thousand good wishes attend you both, and pray remember us to him most kindly.—Ever affectionately yours,

WM. & M. WORDSWORTH.

Rydal, 17th Aug. 1838."

"*Rydal Mount, Oct. 24th, '42.*

DEAR MISS BARRETT,—Through our common friend, Mr. Haydon, I have received a sonnet which his portrait of me suggested. I should have thanked you sooner for this expression of feeling towards myself with which I am much gratified, but I have been absent from home and much occupied.

The conception of your sonnet is in full accordance with the painter's intended work, and the expression vigorous; yet the word 'ebb,' though I do not myself object to it, nor wish it altered, will I fear prove obscure to nine readers out of ten. 'A vision free and noble, Haydon, hath thine art achieved.' Owing to the want of inflections in our language the construction here is obscure. Would it not be better thus? . . . I was going to write a small change in the order of the words, but I find it would not remove the objection. The verse, as I take it, would be somewhat clearer thus, if you could tolerate the redundant syllable: 'By a vision free and noble, Haydon,

^{*} Mr. Dykes Campbell writes: "A copy was sent, for I have it. On the half-title Mrs. Wordsworth has written: 'From Ed. M. Barrett, father of Miss Barrett, to Mr. Wordsworth,' and W. W. has added his own name."

is thine art achieved.' * I had the gratification of receiving, a good while ago, two copies of a volume of your writing, which I have read with much pleasure, and beg that the thanks which I charged a friend to offer may be repeated through you.

It grieved me much to hear from Mr. Kenyon, and now also from Mr. Haydon, that your health is so much deranged. But for that cause I should have presumed to call upon you, when I was in London last spring. With every good wish,—I remain, dear Miss Barrett, your much obliged,

W. WORDSWORTH."

" Rydal Mount, 16th Aug., '44.

DEAR MISS BARRETT,—Being exceedingly engaged at this season, as I always am, I think it best to acknowledge immediately my sense of your kindness in sending me the two volumes of your poems recently published; from the perusal of which, when I am at leisure, I promise myself great pleasure. . . . —Believe me, dear Miss Barrett, to remain, with high respect, faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH."

In a letter to his publisher, written from Rydal Mount on December 11, 1838, Wordsworth refers to a recent tour which Moxon had made in Italy: ". . . You mention Lago de Garda; I hope you went to the head of it. If not, you missed some of the most striking scenery to be found anywhere among the Alps. . . . As to the edition in one volume, I wait for your proposals. So little is gained by having the lines wider apart that I would choose the thirty-six sheets in preference to the forty, but on account of the overflowing lines I could myself have no pleasure in looking at either the one page or the other. In the American edition which you saw, not a single ten-syllable verse overflows, whereas in the pages sent me as

* Mrs. Browning altered this line in her published sonnet—

. . . A noble vision free
Our Haydon's hand has flung out from the mist.

specimens there are nine in one, and eleven in the other ; which both disfigures the book very much, and occupies too much space. The enclosed paper gives the length and width of the American page, within the marginal line, being within a hairs-breadth short. Could not the book be printed on paper sufficiently wide to allow of a ten-syllable verse being uniformly included in one line, as something very considerable would be saved in space ? This would lessen the cost which wider paper would require. I repeat that I have an insurmountable aversion to overflowing lines, except when they cannot be avoided. On this subject, however, as a mere suggestion for the printer, I would ask whether the overflowing word would not be better placed, as formerly, near the end of the verse it belongs to, than so mar the beginning of that line and of the next.

I am in hopes that my nephew, John Wordsworth of Cambridge, will correct the proofs for me, but I grieve to say he has been very unwell, and may not be equal to the task. . . . He is the most accurate [man] that I know, and if a revise of each sheet could be sent to him the edition would be immaculate. . . . What do you, as a publisher, say to an edition of the whole of my poems being now sold in America for 1 franc 25 cents,* or something less than 13d. of our money ? and in India, as I have just learned, a Calcutta edition is sold for six rupees ; so that we are cut off from the Indian market, unless international copyright touches that quarter."

The John Wordsworth referred to in this letter to Moxon was the eldest son of the Master of Trinity, and brother of the poet's biographer, the Bishop of Lincoln, and of the Bishop of St. Andrews. He was a fellow of Trinity. The fear expressed above was too sadly realised. John Wordsworth died at the close of the year 1839, and his uncle wrote

* Wordsworth probably mistook francs for dollars.

thus of the event to Lady Frederick Bentinck, and to his own brother at Cambridge :—

“*Rydal Mount, Ambleside, Jan. 3, [1840].*

MY DEAR LADY FREDERICK,—Yesterday brought us melancholy news in a letter from my brother, Dr. Wordsworth, which announced the death of his eldest son. He died last Tuesday, in Trinity College, of which he was a fellow, having been tenderly nursed by his father, during rather a long illness. He was a most amiable man, and I have reason to believe was one of the best scholars in Europe. We were all strongly attached to him, and as his poor father writes, ‘the loss is to him, and to his sorrowing sons, irreparable on this side of the grave. . . .’

W. W.”

“*Friday, Jan. 3, [1840.]*

MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,—It is in times of trouble and affliction that one feels most deeply the strength of the ties of family and nature. We all most affectionately condole with you, and those who are around you, at this melancholy time. The departed was beloved in this house as he deserved to be; but our sorrow, great as it is for our own sakes, is still heavier for yours and his brothers’. He is a power gone out of our family, and they will be perpetually reminded of it. But the best of all consolations will be with you, with them, with us, and all his numerous friends, that his life had been as blameless as man’s could well be, and, through the goodness of God, he is gone to his reward. . . .—I remain your loving brother,

WM. WORDSWORTH.”

Following closely on his recognition by the University of Durham, the University of Oxford honoured itself in 1839 by conferring on Wordsworth the degree of D.C.L. It fell to the author of *The Christian Year*—a brother poet whom he greatly esteemed, and who was then Professor of Poetry at Oxford

—to present him to the Vice-Chancellor on this occasion. In introducing him Mr. Keble said :—

“Possim etiam illud docere, Academiam, ipsasque adeo literas non bene carere posse suavitate illâ austerâ et solidâ, quâ solet alumnos suos imbuere sapienter et bene acta pauperum juvenus. Verum huic loco satis superque me fecisse arbitrabar, Academici, si semel vobis eum in memoriam revocarem : cum præsertim is præsto sit nobis in nobili hâc coronâ, qui unus omnium maximè poetarum, mores, studia, religiones pauperum collocaverit non dicam bono verum etiam cœlesti lumine. Ad ejus itaque viri carmina remittendos esse hoc tempore putabam, si qui ex intimo animo sentire vellent arcanam illam necessitudinem honestæ Paupertatis cum Musis severioribus, cum excelsa Philosophia, immo cum sacrosanctâ Religione.”

The outburst of enthusiasm which greeted Wordsworth in the Sheldonian Theatre that day has been referred to by many as almost unexampled. His old friend, Pearce of Bristol, “had walked to Oxford,” his nephew tells us, “with some such feelings as a Tuscan of the fourteenth century might have made a pilgrimage to Rome, to see Petrarch crowned in the capitol.” Lord Coleridge says he “received in the theatre an enthusiastic welcome, a cordial, reverent homage which I at least have never seen equalled, and an honour the highest which the University can bestow. Frederick Robertson has recorded that the cheers in the theatre, and the acknowledgment of them by their object, seemed to him out of keeping with the austere simplicity of the poet-sage, and the lofty and unworldly character of his writings. Most of us did not think so then, and on reflection it seems to me that we were right. Wordsworth was at that time at the very height of the fame which he ever achieved in his lifetime ; he had got away even from the echoes of Lord Jeffrey’s

shallow and silly mockery ; his renown was fulfilled ; and to many of us he was an object of worship, and of an honour ' on this side idolatry ' which, if it was but the due of him it was paid to, ennobled also those who paid it :—

We that had loved him so, followed him, honoured him,
Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,
Learned his great language caught his clear accents,
Made him our pattern to live and to die."

Mrs. Arnold wrote thus of the Oxford Ceremonial to Miss Trevenen :—

" July 1839.

Encouraged by the great inducement of seeing Mr. Bunsen and Mr. Wordsworth receive their honorary degrees at Oxford, my husband was tempted to go from Rugby to the Oxford Commemoration, and Jane and I were delighted to accompany him, though it could only be accomplished by getting up before day, and returning at night after all the excitement and fatigue of the theatre. But it was well worth while. . . . Mr. Bunsen was received exceedingly well, and as I should suppose remarkably well known for a foreigner ; but the thundering applause, from all quarters, when the name of Wordsworth was heard, and his venerable form was seen advancing in the procession, I cannot at all describe. It was really delightful to see such a tribute to such a man. It was the public voice for once harmoniously joining to pay homage to goodness, and to talent, consistently employed in promoting the real happiness of his fellow-creatures. To us who know him so intimately, and the true humility and simplicity of his character, it was very affecting and delightful, and I shall always rejoice that I was there."

The fact of Keble's having presented him to the Vice-Chancellor on this occasion recalls the fact that five years later, in 1844, the Professor of Poetry inscribed his *Prælectiones Academicæ*—which he had delivered before the University of Oxford—to Wordsworth, with a dedication which

the bard of Rydal valued much more than the Degree of 1839. It was in the following words :—

Viro Vere Philosopho
 Et Vati Sacro
 GULIELMO WORDSWORTH
 Cui Illud Munus Tribuit
 Deus Opt. Max.
 Ut, Sive Hominum Affectus Caneret,
 Sive Terrarum Et Coeli Pulcritudinem,
 Legentium Animos Semper Ad Sanctiora Erigeret,
 Semper A Pauperum Et Simpliciorum Partibus Staret,
 Atque Adeo, Labente Saeculo, Existeret,
 Non Solum Dulcissimae Poeseos,
 Verum Etiam Divinae Veritatis
 Antistes,
 Unus Multorum, qui Devinctos Se esse Sentiant
 Assiduo Nobilium Ejus Carminum Beneficio,
 Hoc Quaecunque Grati Animi Testimonium
 D.D.D.
 Reverentiae, Pietatis, Amicitiae Ergo.

The “ad sanctiora erigeret” was a phrase which specially delighted Wordsworth. It aptly anticipated the present poet-laureate’s eulogy of his predecessor when dedicating his own poems to the Queen in 1851.

Another dedication addressed to the aged poet in 1848, by his friend Talfourd, may be quoted alongside of this by Keble. The *Final Memorials of Charles Lamb* was inscribed—

To
 WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, Esq., D.C.L.,
 Poet Laureate,
 these Final Memorials
 of one who cherished his friendship, as a comfort amidst
 griefs, and a glory amidst depressions,
 are, with affection and respect,
 inscribed
 by one whose pride is to have been in old time his
 earnest admirer,
 and one of whose fondest wishes is
 that he may be long spared to enjoy fame, rarely accorded
 to the living.

Miss Fenwick, whose name is imperishably linked with Wordsworth's, had come by this time to reside in the neighbourhood of Rydal. She lived at Gale House, Ambleside, and was a great deal with the Wordsworths before she took up her residence at the Mount. What she did for posterity, in recording the circumstances under which the poems were composed—as dictated to her by Wordsworth himself—is the most important contribution ever made towards a commentary upon them. Two other ladies saw much of the Wordsworth household at this time, and preserved their reminiscences—Mrs. Fletcher of Lancrigg, and her daughter Mary, afterwards Lady Richardson. Mary Fletcher met the Wordsworths both at Fox How, at their own Mount, and at Miss Fenwick's. The following are some of her notes taken at Fox How :—

“*Fox How, August 1839.*”

Last evening I went to meet the Rydal Mount party at Miss Fenwick's. On consulting Mr. Wordsworth about the beautiful little farm of Lancrigg (now for sale) in Easedale, he entered into the subject most kindly, and offered to find out for us its real value. He described the tangled copse, and a natural terrace under the crag, as a very favourite resort of his and his sister's in bygone days, and said of the little ‘Rocky Well,’ ‘I know it by heart.’ He then asked Mrs. Wordsworth to look at his *Miscellaneous Sonnets*, and read the one suggested to him there by the likeness of a rock to a sepulchral stone in that hazel copse. This she did with much expression. At this time he wore a green shade, and his head was usually bent down, his eyes being weak. He remembered two or three lines of the sonnet, not the whole. It begins—

Mark the concentrated hazels that enclose
Yon old grey stone protected from the ray
Of noontide suns.

* See the *Autobiography of Mrs. Fletcher* (1876), pp. 244-7.

On Sunday, as we were going to Rydal church, we met Wordsworth, with an Italian gentleman of the name of Miers, whom he was going to put on the way to Grasmere. We walked a little way with them; and as the poet, on Italian politics, is all we can desire, I asked him to inquire from Mr. Miers, who was going to dine at Rydal Mount, if he knew anything of Mazzini at Genoa. Last night Mrs. Arnold and I sat with Mr. Wordsworth for above an hour, and he gave us many interesting particulars which he had heard from this Italian gentleman, with whom he had been much pleased. He said he had asked him about Mazzini, and heard a very high character of him in every respect. Mr. Miers said that shortly before leaving Italy he had called on the mother of Mazzini to ask her commands for her son. She was not well, but she said, 'Don't tell Giuseppe that you found me ill, but tell him that not a day of my life passes that I do not thank God for having given me such a son.' Mr. Miers added that 'it was worthy of a Spartan mother; but what made it so valuable was that it was uttered by a Christian one.'

Wordsworth spoke with strong and deep feeling of the present state of Italy, and the crushing despotism of Austria, supported, as it is in secret, by Russia and Prussia. There is no law of copyright in Italy, so that the more excellent a book is the less chance an author has of making anything of the fruits of his mind. Wordsworth's discourse last night was varied, accurate, moral in its tone, and admirably descriptive of some scenes at Nismes especially,—not a trace of age or forgetfulness, not a link displaced in the chambers of imagery, or in the moral bearings of the subjects he was discussing. I cannot think that Milton himself could have talked more loftily against despotism, or more excellently on truth and justice."

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After quoting her daughter's notes, Mrs. Fletcher adds:—

“We very soon entered on the possibility of the projected purchase of Lancrigg as a summer refreshment, and as her future home at my death, and as I cordially entered into the plan, we authorised Mr. Wordsworth to act as our agent in the affair, which he was most kindly pleased to undertake; and as few people have ever been so favoured as to have had such a poet as their man of business, or such a clerk as his beloved daughter Dora, I here insert her letter to my daughter on the final arrangements, received in October 1839:—

‘Rydal Mount, October 21st, 1839.

My father, who is gone down to Calgarth, where he remains all night, requested me to inform you that this morning he had a long interview with old Rowlandson, which ended in his agreeing to purchase the property of Under Lancrigg for £1,030, £70 less than Mr. R. at first asked; but my father particularly desired that I might say the price “was very handsome, and more than he was likely to get from any other person, and yet, duly weighing the interests of buyer and seller, his conscience allowed him to take the land at that price.” My father named to Mr. R. the time when it best suited Mrs. Fletcher to take possession. His reply was, “The custom of the country is to pay down the purchase-money on the 14th February, when the purchaser comes into possession of the ploughed land, of the pasture land 26th April, of the houses 12th May; and it would not be convenient for me, on account of my farmer, to depart from this custom;” and my father ventured to say that, under these circumstances, doubtless Mrs. Fletcher would be willing to abide by the custom. My father desired me to express his great satisfaction at your becoming possessors of this little property, which has for so many years been so dear to him and his, and where so many happy hours have been passed by them; and his earnest wish that many years of like happy

enjoyment may fall to your and Mrs. Fletcher's share, in which wish I most cordially unite, as would my mother and Miss Fenwick were they here, but they left Ambleside this morning for a three weeks' absence in the county of Durham—my mother to her relatives at Stockton-upon-Tees, Miss Fenwick to hers at Whitton, where she is to meet Mr. Henry Taylor* and his bride. . . .”

The following is from Lady Richardson's note-book † of 1840 :—

“. . . On Thursday we called at the Mount, and the following day, the 4th June, Wordsworth came to an early dinner here. He was in a very happy mood, and threw himself into the interests of our possession in a most engaging manner.

After dinner we all walked over the Intack part of Lancrigg to our boundary-wall, and to the point the poet specially admires, as commanding the wild mountain view into Far Easedale on one side, and the more cultivated peep into the Vale of Grasmere on the other, with the church-tower, the lake, and the end of Loughrigg as the boundary, which is a kind of sun-dial from that point of view. We went through the West Copse, which led us past Kitty Crag to Far Easedale, and back to Thorney How by the flat part of the valley, which goes by the name of Boothwaite, a favourite evening stroll of the poet.

After this we had many meetings of real business with several neighbours Wordsworth consulted, because, as he said, ‘They understand these things much better than I do.’ When we attempted to thank him for the trouble he was taking for us, he took leave, saying, ‘I always feel that those who receive a benefit kindly also confer a favour.’

July 31st we spent at Rydal Mount, a bright evening. Mr.

* Author of *Philip van Artevelde*.

† See *Autobiography of Mrs. Fletcher* (1876), pp. 248-9.

Henry Taylor and his lovely wife came with Miss Fenwick. He is still very handsome, with much of thought and power in his countenance. Mr. Wordsworth told us of a visit they had a few days before from the Princes of Ashantee, and added, 'They were very good company,' and the ladies spoke of the pleasing expression of the younger Prince. It is to be hoped they may escape being eaten by their subjects when they return. What a contrast a tea-party at Rydal Mount, perhaps the highest point in man's civilised life in all its bearings, and a cannibal carousal in the jungles of Ashantee! It would be very interesting to trace the progress of these two Princes, if one could really get near their minds. They are at present under the care of a judicious tutor of the name of Pyne.

After tea the conversation turned on Crabbe and his poetry. Wordsworth considers him a dull man in conversation. He said he did not either give information, nor did he enliven any subject by discussion. He spoke highly of his writings as admirable specimens of the kind, but he does not like the misanthropic vein which runs through them. He was surprised to hear from my mother that Crabbe's prose style was so stiff and artificial in his letters. He said that generally good writers of verse wrote good prose, especially good letters. 'Cowper's letters are everything that letters can be, and many of Burns's are marvellous.' His brother Gilbert, too, was an excellent prose writer. I attribute this very much to the method pursued by their father, and described by their tutor, Mr. Murdoch, a youth engaged to teach them. He details it in a letter in Dr. Currie's *Life of Burns*."

In Lady Richardson's notes the author of *Philip van Artevelde* has been referred to. As Sir Henry Taylor was a friend, and one of the most appreciative critics of Wordsworth, and a special friend of Miss Fenwick, his account of her, and of Rydal Mount at this time, has additional interest:—

“At this time [1840]* Miss Fenwick was brought into relations of the closest intimacy with Wordsworth. Her admiration for him as a poet, always supreme, allied itself with affection for him as a man, and her admiration and affection for him was equalled, if not exceeded, by his for her. She took a house within an easy walk of Rydal Mount, and when that house ceased to be at her disposal, she took up her abode for some time at Rydal Mount itself. Mrs. Wordsworth, who has been justly, as well as *exquisitely*, described in her husband’s verse (and I may use that word, not only as it is commonly used, but also in its derivative sense, as it is used by Milton, for the verses are a real *searching out* of what was in her), attached herself to Miss Fenwick with a warmth and energy of nature which took no account of years ; and it can seldom have happened that a friendship of three persons first formed in advanced life has been so fervent and so inward.

In the spring of 1840 she writes, dating from Rydal Mount, ‘Before I arrived here I thought I would write you a very cross letter’ (I had been dilatory in writing to her), ‘but I must have been the very devil to retain my ill humour in the midst of all this beauty, and the love that so harmonises all the feelings as to make them sensible to it, and almost to it alone. The poor body also seems at ease here ; the atmosphere is perfect, and I can almost walk about like other people, just with so much remembrance of my late oppression as gives a feeling of relief as well as of enjoyment, in a degree such as those blessed spirits must feel in Heaven who have “come out of great troubles.” You are very happy, I trust, my dear cousins, but still in this atmosphere, moral, intellectual, and spiritual, I think you would be more blessedly happy ; and so I wish you were here. No season can be so delightful as this. It is a beauty giving the impression of *progress*, which makes the

* *Autobiography of Henry Taylor*, vol. i. pp. 334-9.

spring the most precious of all seasons. I grieve that you are where you know nothing of it but chickens, and asparagus, and dust, and dissipation. Though of the last you may not much partake, still you see 'the madness of the people.'

And shortly after she writes :—

'I have got this house to the end of October, but that is all. It is likely that I shall then go to Rydal Mount. It is just ten years since I first went there. I think I said to you then I would be content to be a servant in the house to hear his wisdom. Losing sight of all the intermediate steps which have led me hither, how wonderful does it seem to me that I should take up my abode there almost as a matter of necessity ; for could I get another house I would not be there, though I value his wisdom quite as much as I could have done then, and I love him ten thousand times more than I ever expected I should.'

What Miss Fenwick greatly prized in the family was the openness and sincerity with which all thoughts and feelings were expressed, and this she regarded as of infinite value in the regulation of Wordsworth's life and mind. 'There is no domestic altar in that house,' she once said to me ; and if she found none there, neither did she set up one. As the intimacy became closer, her admiration for the personal qualities of the wife became, I think, more unmixed than her admiration for the personal qualities of the husband ; but even when she had arrived at the knowledge of all his faults—and no man's were less hidden—she retained a profound sense of what *was* great in his personal character, as well as an undiminished appreciation of his genius and powers.

At this time her influence over him was invaluable to the family. His love for his only daughter was passionately jealous, and the marriage which was indispensable to her peace and happiness was intolerable to his feelings. The emotions,

I may say the throes and agonies of emotion, he underwent were such as an old man could not have endured without suffering in health, had he not been a very strong old man. But he was like nobody else, old or young. He would pass the night, or most part of it, in struggles and storms, to the moment of coming down to breakfast, and then, if strangers were present, be as easy and delightful in conversation as if nothing was the matter. But if his own health did not suffer, his daughter's did; and this consequence of his resistance, mainly aided, I believe, by the temperate but persistent pressure exercised by Miss Fenwick, brought him at length, though far too tardily, to consent to the marriage. On the 6th May 1841, Miss Fenwick writes from Bath: 'Our marriage still stands for the 11th, and I do sincerely trust nothing will interfere with its taking place on that day, for all parties seem prepared for it. Mr. Wordsworth behaves beautifully.'

It did take place accordingly, and Mrs. Quillinan was granted about six years of happiness in married life before her death in July 1847.

On leaving Bath, Wordsworth, Mrs. Wordsworth, and Miss Fenwick paid a visit to Miss Fenwick's brother-in-law and sister in Somersetshire.

‘We had two perfect days,’ Miss Fenwick writes on the 20th May 1841, ‘for our visit to Wells, Alfoxden, etc. They were worthy of a page or two in the poet's life. Forty-two years, perhaps, never passed over any human head with more gain and less loss than over his. There he was again, after that long period, in the full vigour of his intellect, and with all the fervent feelings which have accompanied him through life; his bodily strength little impaired, but grey-headed, with an old wife and not a young daughter. The thought of what his sister, who had been his companion here, was then and now is, seemed the only painful feeling that moved in his

mind. He was delighted to see again those scenes (and they were beautiful in their kind) where he had been so happy—where he had felt and thought so much. He pointed out the spots where he had written many of his early poems, and told us how they had been suggested. . . . Dear Dora and Mr. Quillinan parted with us at Bridgewater; they proceeded to Rydal Mount and we to Bagborough, where we have been spending some very pleasant days. Mr. Wordsworth and the Squire do very well together. The latter thinks the former a very sensible man, and the former thinks the latter a very pleasant one. The people in Somersetshire know nothing of the poet. They call him Wentworth and Wedgewood, and all sorts of names. But they are kind and hospitable, and he likes to be met on the ground of his common humanity.’ ”

In the foregoing reminiscences Sir Henry Taylor refers to Dora Wordsworth and her marriage to Mr. Quillinan.

Edward Quillinan was born at Oporto in August 1791. Both his parents were of ancient Irish families. He was educated in England, first in the Catholic School at Sedgley Park, Staffordshire (where he had a similar experience to S. T. Coleridge’s at Christ’s Hospital), and afterwards at the Dominican School of Carshalton, near London, where he was happy and well educated; but, being a Catholic, he was not sent to either of the English Universities, which (he tells us in his short autobiography), “he ever since lamented.” He returned to Oporto and entered business, but was only six months at the counting-house. He detested it, his “passion being for books very unlike ledgers.” The French invasion of Portugal drove all English families from it, and the Quillinans went to London. When they had been there a year and a half, his father asked him if he would like to enter the army. He at once assented, and in 1808 was gazetted as cornet in the 2d Dragoon Guards, and joined his regiment at

Hastings and Canterbury. He had time for reading, and even for authorship, and published a satirical poem—he wrote it in three days—which ran through two editions in a month. Another publication, jointly contributed to by himself and other officers, got him into trouble, and several duels followed. He served in the Walcheren expedition in 1809, and afterwards exchanged into the 3d Dragoon Guards, and was with this regiment in Spain in 1813, serving throughout the campaign which ended at Toulon in 1814. In 1816 he published another poem, *The Sacrifice of Isabel*, modelled on the style of Pope, which he dedicated to Sir Egerton Brydges, Bart., of Denton Court, near Dover. In 1817 he married Jemima, the second daughter of Sir Egerton. Continuing in the army, he went with his regiment to Ireland and to Scotland. In 1820-1 he was at Penrith; and there, for the first time, he met the poet, whose works had delighted him during his years of army service. It is rather curious that, having got an introduction to Wordsworth from an Edinburgh friend, who had spoken of himself (Quillinan) rather highly, as he got near Rydal he felt ashamed of presenting it, and rode back to Penrith, the object of his journey unfulfilled. He returned, however, afterwards, without the letter, and introduced himself. In 1821 he left the army, and took up his abode near Rydal in a cottage secured for him by Wordsworth on the banks of the Rothay—Spring Cottage—his chief motive for settling in the district being the opportunity it would give him of intercourse with the poet. Soon after Quillinan's settlement at Rydal, they went together to the Craven district of Yorkshire, to trace imaginatively the footsteps of *The White Doe*, and to visit other localities, Malham Cove, Gordale Chasm, etc., memorialised in sundry sonnets composed two years previously. Mrs. Quillinan died at Ivy Cottage, below Rydal Mount, in 1822, the result of a terrible accident, her dressing-gown having accidentally caught fire. She left two daughters, one of them

only six months old. Dorothy Wordsworth, the poet's sister, attended constantly at the dying bed of her friend; and after her death a very close tie sprang up between the Rydal household and the two motherless children. Dora, the poet's daughter, then eighteen years of age, became to them, as the years advanced, a sort of second mother. After his wife's death Quillinan went abroad, to seek relief from sorrow in change of scene, his children being taken to Kent. Both of these children are associated with Wordsworth's poetic work. A picture of the elder—who still lives, to the joy of her circle of friends at Loughrigg Holme—taken when she was a school-girl at Oporto, gave rise to the *Lines suggested by a Portrait*, written in 1834, beginning—

Beguiled into forgetfulness of care.

The younger, Rotha, was the poet's godchild, and to her he wrote the lines beginning—

Rotha! my spiritual child, this head was grey
When at the sacred font for thee I stood.

After his bereavement, Mr. Quillinan removed from Rydal, accepting an invitation from his brother-in-law, Colonel Brydges Barrett, to occupy the family residence of Lee Priory, near Canterbury, the Brydges family being on the Continent. Here he received both the poet and his family more than once. When the Brydges returned, Quillinan went to Portugal to see his father; and on his return to England lived chiefly in the Brydges' house in Bryanston Street, London, where he received the Wordsworths as his guests. He also returned their visits, and came down to Rydal. In 1832 he left London, and lived in Paris and Boulogne, returning to England in 1835, going back to Portugal with his eldest daughter in 1836 for a year, and afterwards taking up his residence for four years at Canterbury. Nineteen years intervened between the death of his first wife and his second marriage. It will be seen from Sir Henry Taylor's *Autobiography* that Wordsworth's opposi-

tion to the marriage of his daughter to Mr. Quillinan was intense. It was partly based, I have been told, on the fact of Quillinan's being a Roman Catholic ;* but it was due, I fear, quite as much to his own "passionately jealous" affection—to use Sir Henry Taylor's phrase—for his daughter. He was not averse to her marriage, but he thought no one worthy of her. Sir Henry Taylor depicts the struggle that went on in the old man's nature, and it need not be repeated. At length he saw—thanks mainly to Miss Fenwick's wise appeals—that it was wrong to oppose a union which Dora herself wished, and that his opposition to it was injuring his daughter's health.

On the 11th of May 1841, they were married in St. James's Church at Bath, Wordsworth, his wife, and two of his sons being present, as well as Quillinan's brother John. They were all at that time on a visit to Miss Fenwick, whose home was now in Bath. After the ceremony, Wordsworth went with his wife and Miss Fenwick on a short tour in Somersetshire. The Quillinans joined them, and together they visited Alfoxden, and other places teeming with associations to the poet ; his only sorrow being that Dorothy, the early partner of his joys in the Quantock country, was an invalid in Westmoreland. The Quillinans left the poet and his wife at Bridgewater, and proceeded thence to Rydal Mount, the Wordsworths prolonging their sojourn in the south of England. They were nearly four months away from Rydal. In writing to his friend John Peace after his return, Wordsworth said—

“*Rydal Mount, Sept. 4, 1841.*”

MY DEAR PEACE,— . . . We made a very agreeable tour in Devonshire, going by Exeter to Plymouth, and returning along the coast by Salisbury and Winchester to London. In

* Quillinan was born and educated a Roman Catholic, but he attended the Church of England, and used the Anglican service-book in his household.

† See p. 379.

London and its neighbourhood we stayed not quite a month. During this tour we visited my old haunts, at and about Alfoxden and Netherstowey, and at Coleorton, where we stayed several days. These were farewell visits for life, and, of course, not a little interesting. . . .—Ever faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH."

The Quillinans did not, however, remain long in Westmoreland, but proceeded to Lee Priory on a visit to the Brydges. After a few months at Canterbury they came up to London, where they seem to have spent a year; and in the winter of 1842-3, Dora's health suffering, they returned to Westmoreland, and lived at Ambleside. The summers of 1843 and 1844 were spent by them in the "island" home of the Curwens on Windermere. Worthsworth's eldest son having married Mr. Curwen's daughter, this house was often lent to his friends, which led the poet to make a pun upon the place, and say it should be called the Borrow-me-an (Borromean) island. It was a pleasant home to Quillinan. He described it to Miss Fenwick (August 1843):—

"This island-home is the most delightful residence in the world. . . . With sunny days and serene moonlights, we have lived quite as much on the water as on the shore, gliding about the islands as familiarly by night as by day."

While living in the Curwen's house at Belle Isle, the Quillinans seem to have rejoiced much in the friendly visits of Professor Wilson from Elleray; and probably these summer days of 1843 and 1844 were the happiest in Dora Wordsworth's married life. In 1844 Quillinan wrote to Crabb Robinson from Ambleside: . . . "What a heavenly-earthly season it is! It is enough to live and breathe such air; see such flowers, such stars, such moonlight, such variety of vegetation, and vapour and shadow on lakes and mountain, and to hear such joyous carolling from every bush."

The following winter was a trying one for Mrs. Quillinan, and, her delicacy increasing with the spring of 1845, it was decided that she should try what a change of air would do for her, and accompany her husband to his native place, Oporto. While in the Peninsula, she was able to travel about a good deal, visiting Lisbon, Seville, as well as other places, which she described after her return to England in a couple of volumes, entitled, *A Journal of a few months' residence in Portugal*, and *Glimpses of the South of Spain*. In July 1846 they came back to Westmoreland, and took up their residence at Loughrigg Holme, where Mr. Carter—Wordsworth's clerk and assistant—had lived. Carter vacated the house for the Quillinans, and superintended the enlargement of it for them, during the time of their absence in Portugal. It was the best possible place for them both to pass the brief remainder of their days—a lovely spot at the foot of one of the outlying buttress-points of Loughrigg Fall, close to Rydal Mount and Church, near to Fox How, and not far from Ambleside. There the two volumes of Dora's *Journal* were written (they were published in 1847), while Quillinan wrote articles for *The Quarterly* and for *Tait's Magazine*.

Shortly before Christmas 1846 Mrs. Quillinan went up from Rydal to Carlisle, to prepare her brother William's house for his marriage. On her way, or while living there, she caught a cold, from which she never recovered. On returning, she went to the Mount, her parents being absent at Westminster, with their nephew Christopher. They were summoned to the north by the serious nature of her illness. In April she was told she could not recover. She received the announcement with a calm and humble cheerfulness. "Willing to live, yet resigned to die," said her husband, she lingered on for many weeks in that house, once bright with her laughter and her gaiety; and at length, on the 9th of July, her release came, and she was laid to rest beside her infant

brothers and sister in Grasmere churchyard. Quillinan's intense and almost passionate grief found utterance in his *Suspiria*, and other sonnets. He was stricken to the heart; and yet went on his way, lonely, submissive, and still.

The loss of his daughter was a more terrible blow to the poet, and will be referred to in a later chapter. Quillinan continued to live at Loughrigg Holme, which his daughter still occupies. He wrote for *Blackwood's Magazine*, translated part of *The Lusiad*—five cantos in *ottava rima*—and three or four volumes of the *History of Portugal* by Senor Herculano, the royal librarian at Lisbon. He was much with Wordsworth, when the now aged and grief-stricken poet was able to walk about. He survived him little more than a year. Having caught a chill at some fishing expedition, he succumbed to an attack of pleurisy in July 1851. An hour before he died, while almost unconscious, unable to recognise his daughter, he asked "James"—the Rydal Mount servant—to bring him his pen and ink, and his MS., that he might go on with his *History of Portugal*, saying: "I want to finish, or it will be of no use to them" (meaning his daughter). In 1853 a volume of Quillinan's poems was published by Mr. Moxon.

Returning to the life at Rydal Mount in the year 1840, we find Wordsworth writing in January of that year to Barron Field, who urged the publication of his *Critical Memoir* of the poet, which he had prepared with such miscellaneous care.

" *Rydal Mount, January 16, 1840.*

MY DEAR MR. FIELD,—I have at last brought myself to write to you. After maturely considering the subject, however painful it may be to me, I must regret that I am decidedly against the publication of your critical memoir; your wish is, I know, to serve me, and I am grateful for the strength of this

feeling in your excellent heart. I am also truly proud of the pains you have thought my writings worthy of; but I am sure that your intention to benefit me in this way would not be fulfilled. The hostility which you combat so ably is in a great measure passed away, but might in some degree be revived by your recurrence to it, so that in this respect your work would, if published, be either superfluous or injurious, as far as concerns this main portion of it. I shall endeavour, during the short remainder of my life, to profit by it, both as an author and a man, in a private way; but the notices of me by many others which you have thought it worth while to insert, are full of gross mistakes, both as to facts and opinions, and the sooner they are forgotten the better. Old as I am, I live in the hope of seeing you, and should in that event have no difficulty in reconciling you to the suppression of a great part of this work entirely—and of the whole of it in its present shape. . . . One last word in matter of authorship: it is far better not to admit people so much behind the scenes, as it has been lately fashionable to do. . . .—Believe me to be most faithfully your much obliged, WM. WORDSWORTH."

In the following month he wrote thus to the Rev. Henry Alford, afterwards Dean of Canterbury, and distinguished both as a poet and a critic:—

[Postmark—*Ambleside*, Feb. 21, 1840.]

"MY DEAR SIR,— . . . It cannot but be highly gratifying to me to learn that my writings are prized so highly by a poet and critic of your powers. The essay upon them which you have so kindly sent me seems well qualified to promote your views in writing it. I was particularly pleased with your distinction between religion in poetry, and versified religion. For my own part, I have been averse to frequent mention of the mysteries of Christian faith; not from a want of a due sense of their momentous nature, but the contrary. I felt it far too deeply to venture on handling the subject as familiarly as

many scruple not to do. I am far from blaming them, but let them not blame me, nor turn from my companionship on that account. Besides general reasons for diffidence in treating subjects of Holy Writ, I have some special ones. I might err in points of faith, and I should not deem my mistakes less to be deprecated because they were expressed in metre. Even Milton, in my humble judgment, has erred, and grievously; and what poet could hope to atone for misapprehensions in the way in which that mighty mind has done?

I am not at all desirous that any one should write an elaborate critique on my poetry. There is no call for it. If they be from above, they will do their own work in course of time; if not, they will perish as they ought. But scarcely a week passes in which I do not receive grateful acknowledgments of the good they have done to the minds of the several writers. They speak of the relief they have received from them under affliction and in grief, and of the calmness and elevation of spirit which the poems either give or assist them in attaining. As these benefits are not without a traceable bearing upon the good of the immortal soul, the sooner, perhaps, they are pointed out and illustrated in a work like yours, the better."

A series of five letters to the artist Haydon, written during the year 1840, may follow this to Dean Alford. But to make the series intelligible without further comment, they should be preceded by a letter from Haydon to Wordsworth. In the successive notes to his friend a specimen will be found of Wordsworth's careful elaboration—his poetic sculpture-work.

" *March 3, 1840.*"

MY DEAR WORDSWORTH,—At last I have accomplished one of the day-dreams of my earliest youth, viz. lecturing at the University.

* *Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon.* Edited by Tom Taylor. Vol. iii. pp. 138-40.

I have been received with distinction by the Vice-Chancellor and the heads of Colleges, granted the Ashmolean Museum, and gave my first lecture yesterday, which was positively hailed.

There are four honours in my life—First, the sonnet of Wordsworth ; second, the freedom of my native town for Solomon ; third, the public dinner in Edinburgh ; and fourth, my reception at Oxford.

The first and the last are the greatest. But the first is the first, and will ever remain so, whilst a vibration of my heart continues to quiver.

Who said, ‘High is our calling,’ when all the world was adverse to desert? There was the foresight—there the manliness—there the energy and affection which have marked the poet’s career from beginning to conclusion.

You are a glorious creature, and is not our calling high? Would all the crowns, and kingdoms and jewels on earth have bribed you to say that of a man if you had not felt it? And why did you feel it? Because you saw it.

You have lived to your complete victory on earth ; you have nothing now to expect but ‘Well done, thou good and faithful servant!’ May that hour, for the sake of your friends here, be long deferred ! but it will not the less come.

After the distinction of yesterday my mind instinctively turned to you. Fancy my reception here, and fancy those fellows at the London University conceiving a man of my misfortunes would have injured the religious and moral purity of their character, if I had lectured there. ‘An ounce and three-quarters of civet,’—or rather a couple of pounds.

If I was to die this moment, my dear friend, I would thank God with my last breath for this great opportunity of doing my duty. Hurrah ! with all my soul. Your affectionate old friend,

B. R. HAYDON.”

To this Wordsworth replied :—

“ Rydal Mount, Ambleside, March 12th, 1840.

MY DEAR HAYDON,—Though I have nothing to say but merely words of congratulation, hearty congratulation, I cannot forbear to thank you for your letter. You write in high spirits, and I am glad of it: it is only fair that, having had so many difficulties to encounter, you should have a large share of triumph. Nevertheless, though I partake most cordially of your pleasure, I should have been still more delighted to learn that your pencil (for that, after all, is the tool you were made for) met with the encouragement it so well deserves.

I should have liked to have been among your auditors, particularly so as I have seen, not long ago, so many first-rate pictures on the Continent, and to have heard you at Oxford would have added largely to my gratification. I love and honour that place for abundant reasons, nor can I ever forget the distinction bestowed upon myself last summer by that noble-minded University.

Allow me to mention one thing on which, if I were qualified to lecture upon your art, I should dwell with more attention than, so far as I know, has been bestowed upon it—I mean perfection in each kind as far as it is attainable. This in widely different minds has been shown by the Italians, by the Flemings, the Dutch, the Spaniards, the Germans, and why should I exclude the English?

Now, as a masterly, a first-rate ode or elegy, or piece of humour even, is better than a poorly or feebly executed epic poem, so is the picture, though in point of subject the humblest that ever came from an easel, better than a work after Michael Angelo or Raffaele in choice of subject, or aim of style, if moderately performed. All styles, down to the humblest, are good, if there be thrown into the choosing all that the subject is capable of, and this truth applies not only

to painting, but in degree to every other fine art. Now it is well worth a lecturer's while, who sees the matter in this light, first to point out through the whole scale of art what stands highest, and then to show what constitutes the appropriate perfection of all, down to the lowest. Ever, my dear Haydon, faithfully yours,
W. WORDSWORTH."

On the 4th of September 1840, Haydon records in his *Diary*:—*

"Hard at work, and heard from dear Wordsworth, with a glorious sonnet on the Duke and Copenhagen. It is very fine, so I began a new journal directly, and put in the sonnet. God bless him!"

The following is Wordsworth's letter:—

"MY DEAR HAYDON,—We are all charmed with your etching. It is both poetically and pictorially conceived, and finely executed. I should have written immediately to thank you for it and for your letter and the enclosed one, which is interesting, but I wished to gratify you by writing a sonnet. I now send it, but with an earnest request that it may not be put into circulation for some little time, as it is warm from the brain, and may require, in consequence, some little retouching. It has this, at least, remarkable attached to it—which will add to its value in your eyes—that it was actually composed while I was climbing Helvellyn last Monday. My daughter and Mr. Quillinan were with me; and she, which I believe had scarcely ever been done before, rode every inch of the way to the summit, and a magnificent day we had.

* See his *Life*, vol. iii. pp. 160-2.

Sonnet suggested by Haydon's picture of the Duke of Wellington upon the Field of Waterloo twenty years after battle.

First reading :—

By art's bold privilege, warrior and war-horse stand
On ground yet strewn with their last battle's wreck.
Let the steed glory, while his master's hand
Lies, fixed for ages, on his conscious neck.
But, by the chieftain's look, tho' at his side
Hangs that day's treasured sword, how firm a check
Is given to triumph, and all human pride !
Yon trophied mound shrinks to a shadowy speck
In his calm presence. Since the mighty deed
Him years have brought far nearer the grave's rest,
As shows that face time-worn. But he such seed
Has sowed that bears, we trust, the fruit of fame
In heaven ; hence no one blushes for *thy name*,
Conqueror ! 'mid some sad thoughts divinely blest.

Composed while ascending Helvellyn, Monday, August 31st,
1840. WILLIAM WORDSWORTH."

" MY DEAR MR. HAYDON,—Correct thus the two last lines
towards the close of the sonnet :—

As shows that time-worn face. But he such seed
Hath sown, as yields, we trust, the fruit of fame
In heaven, etc.

You will see the reason of this alteration. It applies now
to his life in general, and not to that particular act as before.
You may print the sonnet where and when you will, if you
think it will serve you ; only it may be well that I should
hear from you first, as you may have something to suggest
either as to the letter or the lines.—Yours in haste,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

Friday, Sept. 4th."

" I am quite ashamed to trouble you again, but after con-
sidering and re-considering, changing and re-changing, it has

been resolved that the troublesome passage shall stand thus:—

In his calm presence. Him the mighty deed
 Elates not, brought far nearer the grave's rest,
 As shows that time-worn face. But * he such seed
 Hath sown as yields, we trust, etc.

—Faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

Rydal Mount, Monday, Sept. 7th, 1840."

"*Rydal, Sept. 10th.*

By is certainly a better word than *through*; but I fear it cannot be employed on account of the subsequent line:—

But *by* the chieftain's look.

To me the two 'bys' clash both to the ear and understanding, and it was on that account I changed the word. I have also a slight objection to the alliteration 'by bold' occurring so soon. I am glad you like 'elates not.' As the passage first stood—

Since the mighty deed,

there was a transfer of the thought from the picture to the living man, which divided the sonnet into two parts. The presence of the portrait is now carried through till the last line, when the man is taken up. To prevent the possibility of a mistake I will repeat the passage as last sent, and in which state I consider it finished; and you will do what you like with it:—

Him the mighty deed
 Elates not, brought far nearer the grave's rest,
 As shows that time-worn face. But he such seed
 Hath sown as yields, etc.

I hope you are right in thinking this the best of the three. I forget whether I thanked you for your sketch of the Slave-

* "For" in the printed version of the sonnet.

trade picture. Your friendship has misled you. I must on no account be introduced. I was not present at the meeting, as matter of fact; and, though from the first I took a lively interest in the abolition of slavery, except joining with those who petitioned Parliament, I was too little of a man of business to have an active part in the work. Besides, my place of abode would have prevented it, had I been so inclined. The only public act of mine connected with the event was sending forth that sonnet, which I addressed to Mr. Clarkson, upon the success of the undertaking. Thank you for your last letter. I am this moment (while dictating this letter), sitting to Mr. Pickersgill, who has kindly come down to paint me at leisure, for Sir Robert Peel, in whose gallery at Drayton the portrait will probably be hung by that of my poor friend Southey.—I am, my dear Haydon, yours faithfully,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

P.S.—Your suggestion about the engraver is very candid; but, the verses taking so high a flight, and particularly in the line ‘Lies fixed for ages,’ it would be injurious to put forward the cold matter of fact, and the sense and spirit of the sonnet both demand that it should be suggested at the sight of the *picture*.”

“MY DEAR HAYDON,—I could not otherwise get rid of the prosaic declaration of the matter of fact that the hero was so much older. You will recollect that it at first stood,

Since the mighty deed

Him years, etc.

I know not what to do with the passage, if it be not well corrected as follows :—

Him the mighty deed

Elates not : neither doth a cloud find rest

Upon that time-worn face ; for he such seed

Hath sown, etc.

I sent the sonnet, as it was before corrected, to Mr. Lowndes, as you desired. When you print it, if it be in course of next week, pray send a copy to this house, and another to me at Lowther Castle, whither I am going to-morrow.—Very faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

Rydal Mount, September 11.

The space for alteration in this troublesome passage, you will observe, was very confined, as it was necessary to advert to the Duke being much older, which is yet done in the words “time-worn face,” but not so strongly as before, W. W.”

In July 1840 Wordsworth wrote to Lady Frederick Bentinck, daughter of Lord Lonsdale: “On Monday morning, a little before nine, a beautiful and bright day, the Queen Dowager and her sister appeared at Rydal. I met them at the lower waterfall, with which her Majesty seemed much pleased. Upon hearing that it was not more than half a mile to the higher fall, she said, briskly, she would go; I walked by the Queen’s side up to the higher waterfall, and she seemed to be much struck with the beauty of the scenery.

Upon quitting the park of Rydal, nearly opposite our own gate, the Queen was saluted with a pretty rural spectacle; nearly fifty children, drawn up in avenue, with bright garlands in their hands, three large flags flying, and a band of music. They had come from Ambleside, and the garlands were such as are annually prepared at this season for a ceremony called ‘The Rush-bearing’; and the parish-clerk of Ambleside hit upon this way of showing at Rydal the same respect to the Queen which had been previously shown at Ambleside. I led the Queen to the principal points of view in our little domain, particularly to that, through the summer-house, which shows the lake of Rydal to such advantage. The Queen talked more than once about having a cottage among the lakes,

which of course was nothing more than a natural way of giving vent to the pleasure which she had in the country.—Ever affectionately yours,
W. WORDSWORTH."

Towards the close of this year, 1840, an accident occurred to Wordsworth, which might very easily have proved serious. It was in the month of November, as he was being driven in a gig from Keswick to Grasmere, and he himself described the incident in a letter to Lady Frederick Bentinck.

"These were the particulars: About three miles beyond Keswick, on the Ambleside Road, is a small bridge, from the top of which we got sight of the mail-coach coming towards us, at above forty yards' distance, just before the road begins to descend a narrow, steep, and winding slope. Nothing was left for James, who drove the gig in which we were, but to cross the bridge, and, as the road narrowed up the slope that was in our front, to draw up as close to the wall on our left (our side of the road) as possible. The coachman drove furiously down the hill; and though, as we afterwards ascertained, by the track of his wheels, he had a yard width of road to spare, he made no use of it. The wheel of his coach struck our wheel most violently, drove back our horse and gig some yards, and then sent us all together through a small gap in the wall, with the stones of the wall tumbling about us, into a plantation, that lay a yard perpendicular below the level of the road from which the horse and gig, with us in it, had been driven. The shafts were broken off close to the carriage, and we were partly thrown and partly leaped out. After breaking the traces, the horse leaped back into the road and galloped off, the shafts and traces sticking to him; nor did the poor creature stop till he reached the turnpike at Grasmere, seven miles from the spot where the mischief was done."

The mail-coachman's account of this accident was given previously.

The following letter from Wordsworth to Mr. Benjamin Dockray, Lancaster, gives his views on the question of slavery. The year is uncertain :—

“*Rydal Mount, April 25.*”

MY DEAR SIR,—Your *Egeria* * arrived on the morning when I was setting off to visit my son, with whom I stayed nearly three weeks. This must be my apology for not thanking you for the valuable present somewhat earlier. The strain of your thoughts is I think excellent, and the expression everywhere suitable to the thought. I have to thank you also for a most valuable paper on Colonial slavery. In your view of this important subject I entirely coincide. Fanaticism is the disease of these times as much or more than of any other; fanaticism is set, as it has always been, whether moral, religious, or political, upon attainment of its ends with disregard of the means. In this question there are *three* parties,—the slave, the slave-owner, and the British people. As to the first, it might be submitted to the consideration of the owner whether, in the present state of society, he can, as a matter of private conscience, retain his property in the slave, after he is convinced that it would be for the slave's benefit, civil, moral, and religious, that he should be emancipated. Whatever pecuniary loss might, under these circumstances, attend emancipation, it seems that a slave-owner, taking a right view of the case, ought to be prepared to undergo it. It is probable, however, that one of the best assurances which could be given of the slave being likely to make a good use of his liberty would be found in his ability and disposition to make a recompense for the sacrifice should the master, from the state of his affairs, feel himself justified in accepting a recompense. But by no means does it follow, from this view

* *Egeria* was published in 1840, which gives (approximately) the date of this letter.

of individual cases, that the *third* party, the people of England, who through their legislature have sanctioned and even encouraged slavery, have a right to interfere for its destruction by a sweeping measure, of which an equivalent to the owner makes no part. This course appears to me unfeeling and unjust. . . .

What language, in the first place, would it hold out to the slave? that the property in him had been held by unqualified usurpation and injustice on the part of his master alone; which would be as much as to say, We have delivered him over to you, and as no other party was to blame, deal with your late oppressors as you like. Surely such a proceeding would also be a wanton outrage upon the feelings of the masters, and poverty, distress, and disorder could not but ensue.

They who are most active in promoting entire and immediate Abolition do not seem sufficiently to have considered that slavery is not in itself, at all times, and under all circumstances, to be deplored. In many states of society it has been a check upon worse evils; so much inhumanity has prevailed among men, that the best way of protecting the weak from the powerful has often been found in what seems at first sight a monstrous arrangement—viz. in one man having a property in many of his fellows. Some time ago many persons were anxious to have a Bill brought into Parliament to protect inferior animals from the cruelty of their masters. It has always appeared to me that such a law would not have the effect intended, but would increase the evil. The best surety for an uneducated man behaving with care and kindness to his beast lies in the sense of the uncontrolled property which he possesses in him. Hence a livelier interest, and a more efficient responsibility to his own conscience, than could exist were he made accountable for his conduct to law. I mention this simply by way of illustration, for no man can deplore more than I do a state of slavery in itself. I do not only

deplore, but I *abhor* it, if it could be got rid of without the introduction of something worse, which I much fear would not be the case with respect to the West Indies, if the question be dealt with in the way many excellent men are so eagerly set upon. I am, dear Sir, very sincerely your obliged,

WM. WORDSWORTH."

CHAPTER XLIII.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. MOXON—1840-1845.

WORDSWORTH'S correspondence with his publisher, Mr. Moxon, was extensive, and much of it is extremely interesting. There is sufficient continuity in his letters written during the years 1840 to 1845 to warrant the publication of consecutive extracts from them, rather than the breaking up of the series by the introduction of other matter.

“Rydal, 18th Jan. 1840.

MY DEAR MR. MOXON,— . . . Mr. W. has been a week with us taking sketches with a view to the illustration of my poems. . . . He has done pretty well. In particular, he has made a very good drawing in perspective of the interior of our dining and sitting-room. It has a most picturesque appearance, and I cannot but think would be acceptable to those who take an interest in my writings. He has also done the outside of the house and the surrounding landscape.

I set my face entirely against the publication of Mr. Field's MSS. I ought to have written to him several weeks ago, but feeling as I did—being truly sensible of the interest he took in my character and writings, and grateful to him for having bestowed so much time upon the subjects—I could not bring myself to tell him what I have with all frankness told to you.* Mr. Field has been very little in England, I imagine, for above twenty years; and, consequently, is not aware that

* But compare Wordsworth's letter to Field, p. 386.

much the greater part of his labour would only answer the purpose of reviving forgotten things and exploded opinions. Besides, there are in his notions things that were personally *disagreeable*—not to use a harsher term—to myself and those about me; and if such an objection did not lie against the publication, it is enough that the thing is *superfluous*. In the present state of this country in general, how could this kind-natured friend then be deceived into the thought that criticism and particulars so minute could attract attention even from a few? . . .

Hartley has positively asserted to my son and another gentleman that he considers his part of the work at an end. True, he said, I could go on for ever; but 60 pages—20 more than Jonson—are scarcely enough. I write this in consequence of your saying in your last: ‘The introduction to *Massinger* is still unfinished.’ Perhaps all is right by this time.

Murray used to say that advertising always paid. So it might with him, but with old books like mine, I should imagine that advertisements frequently repeated in the forthcoming of a new edition would not answer well; and therefore I am against it rather. I leave the decision to your friendly judgment.—Faithfully yours, WM. WORDSWORTH.”

“*February 24, 1840.*

MY DEAR MR. MOXON,—Not being able to meet with H. C.* immediately on receipt of your letter, I wrote him a note a couple of days after, and told him its contents. I have since seen him, and done all I could. And now let me give you, in respect to him, a piece of advice, once for all, viz. that you *never* engage with him for any *unperformed* work, when either time or quantity is of importance. Poor fellow! he has no resolve; in fact, nothing that can be called rational will or command of himself, as to what he will do or not do; of course,

* Hartley Coleridge.

I mean, setting aside the *fundamental* obligations of morality. Yesterday I learnt that he had disappeared from his lodgings, and that he had been seen at eight o'clock entering the town of Kendal. He was at Ambleside the night before at eleven o'clock; so he must have been out the greater part of the night. I have lately begun to think that he has given himself up to his own notions, fancies, reveries, abstractions, etc. I admire his genius and talents far more than I could find words to express, especially for writing prose, which I am inclined to think (as far as I have seen) is more masterly than his verse. The *workmanship* of the latter seems to me not unfrequently too hasty, has indeed too much the air of an Italian's *improvisatore* production.

Mr. Powell, my friend, has some thought of preparing for publication some portions of Chaucer modernised, as far and no further than is done in my treatment of *The Prioress' Tale*. That would, in fact, be his model. He will have coadjutors: among whom, I believe, will be Mr. Leigh Hunt, a man as capable of doing the work well as any living writer. I have placed at my friend Mr. Powell's disposal, in addition to *The Prioress' Tale*, three other pieces, which I did long ago, but revised the other day. They are *The Manciple's Tale*, *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale*, and twenty-four stanzas of *Troilus and Cressida*. This I have done mainly out of my love and reverence for Chaucer, in hopes that whatever may be the merits of Mr. Powell's attempt, the attention of other writers may be drawn to the subject; and a work hereafter be produced by different persons, which will place the treasures of one of the greatest of poets within the reach of the multitude, which now they are not. I mention all this to you because, though I have not given Mr. Powell the least encouragement to do so, he may sound you as to your disposition to undertake the publication. I have myself nothing further to do with it than I have stated. Had the thing been sug-

gested to me by any number of competent persons twenty years ago, I would have undertaken the editorship, and done much more myself, and endeavoured to improve the several contributions where they seemed to require it. But that is now out of the question.

I am glad to hear so favourable an account of the sale of this new edition. The penny postage has let in an inundation of complimentary letters upon me. Yesterday I had one that would amuse you by the language of awe, veneration, and gratitude, etc., in which it abounds; and two or three days ago I had one from a little boy of eight years old. . . .

In several of these letters there is one thing which gratified me, viz. the frequent mention of the consolation which my poems have afforded the writers under affliction, and the calmness and elevation of mind which they have produced.

My paper is quite full. I hope you will see my dear daughter from time to time. To-morrow she goes to 10 Chester Place, to her friends the Coleridges.

I am not inclined to go to London this spring. Visiting, talking, late dinners, etc., are too hard work for me."

" *Rydal Mount, March 27, 1840.*

MY DEAR MR. MOXON,—. . . The sonnets upon Capital Punishment which I send you (of which I sent you no more, I believe, than four) are now eleven, I should not be sorry to put them into circulation, on account of the importance of the subject, if I knew how. I cannot print them in a magazine, for reasons you are aware of. . . .—Ever yours,

W. WORDSWORTH."

" *December 17, 1840.*

DEAR MR. MOXON,—. . . You told me *The Excursion* was out of print. What do you say to reprinting it, in double column, stereotyped all but the pages, so that the same plates might serve hereafter, the paging being altered for the concluding part of the volume, when the whole shall be published in one?

I have two motives for this : the one a desire to make the book acceptable to mechanics and others, who have little money to spare, and next to show from as many instances, with which this would concur, that books are as likely to be sold as cheap as they can be afforded, should the term of copyright be extended ; and that, in fact, they could in that case be sold cheaper, since—there being no dread of competition—editions might be larger, and would, of course, be sold at less price. Let me hear from you on this point at your early convenience. . . .—Sincerely yours,

W. WORDSWORTH."

"March 4, 1841.

. . . I have intrusted the looking over the six volumes* to Mr. Carter, who is much more able than myself to detect errors. . . . He will have his papers ready to send off in a couple of days, and then the printing may commence.

By way of secret, I must let you know that I have just been copying out about 2000 lines of miscellaneous poems from MSS., some of which date so far back as 1793, and others from that time, at various periods, to the present day. If I could muster 1000 lines more, there would be enough for another volume, to match pretty well in size with the rest ; but, this not being the case, I am rather averse to publication. You will hear more of this hereafter.† . . .—Ever faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH."

"October 2, 1841.

. . . To gratify Haydon, I wrote lately a sonnet on his picture of Wellington, etc., and placed it at his disposal, either to publish, when and where he liked, or to circulate in MS. It was published accordingly, but with so many gross typographical blunders, that I am resolved nothing of mine shall make its first appearance in that way again."

* Of the edition of 1842.

† It became the volume of *Poems, chiefly of Early and Late Years*, first published in 1842.

“November 5, 1841.

MY DEAR MR. MOXON,—. . . Mr. Aubrey de Vere is very much interested in the publication of a selection from my poems, but materially different in the choice from Mr. Hine's. What do you say to that? Dare you venture upon it? He has furnished me with a list according to his own choice. . . .—Ever faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.”

“Dec. 24, 1841.

MY DEAR MR. MOXON,—The few words I have to say must be an expression of indignation at hearing that you were charged the enormous sum of £83 for corrections in carrying the six volumes through the press. I know not what check publishers have upon printers, and what is the course of practice as to charging for alterations. But sure I am that, in common justice, things ought not to go on in the way you have been treated; for I affirm upon the strength of my own memory, and upon a much better authority,—that of Mr. Carter's young clerk, through whose hands passed my sheets of the six volumes, excepting a very few of the first volume,—that of the alterations very much the greatest part were caused by the inattention of the printers, to directions *precisely given*, or to their own gross blunders. It was, I own, a case that required particular attention, because the whole volume of the *Yarrow Revisited* was interwoven with the poems previously collected, and the arrangement was, for good reasons, in several instances, altered; but the directions given by Mr. Carter and myself were precise and distinct; and it is the first duty of a printer to *attend* to such directions. I am sorry to say there was a like carelessness shown in carrying the volume of *Sonnets* through the press. . . . I will here add, by-the-by, that being prompted to take leave of Italy in verse, I wrote lately six sonnets upon that suggestion, and have added eleven others, that partly rose out of the farewell. I should like

these thirty sonnets some time or other to be printed in the *same* class, as they were all composed during the current year.
—Yours faithfully, W. W.”

“18th Jan. 1842.

MY DEAR MR. MOXON,—Your account of the depressed state of the book-trade makes me almost indifferent about publishing the volume which I am preparing. I, nevertheless, continue making corrections, and getting it transcribed by my kind friends and inmates. It is now quite ready for the press; and I'll give you a slight sketch of its contents. First, a poem of 75 Spenserian stanzas, 23 of which have already been published, in the former editions, under the title of the 'Female Vagrant.' The whole poem was written in the years 1793-94; but the yet unpublished parts have been carefully revised. Next came three or four elegiac poems, two of them upon visiting the grave of Burns. Next, an epistle of thirty-four lines addressed to Sir G. Beaumont in 1811; then other miscellaneous poems, written about and after that period. Several others of much more recent date down to the present time (that is, since the *Yarrow Revisited*). The twelve sonnets of the Appendix to be reprinted, and the other miscellaneous ones, with the final fourteen,* nearly 800 lines of Memorials of my Italian tour. The two versions of Chaucer, printed by Mr. Powell; and lastly, a Tragedy,† written in my 25th and 26th years, and which has lain by me till now. The whole will—if printed—one sonnet in a page, and only two Spenserian stanzas, make a volume fully as thick, I think, as the thickest of the six.

And now for the mode of proceeding. I cannot tell you at once. I would not, *on any account*, print less than two thousand, and am extremely averse to striking off less than three thousand, because I do not think it advisable to stereotype—

* The *Sonnets upon the Punishment of Death*.

† *The Borderers*.

these poems being designed to be interspersed in some future edition of the whole, perhaps in double columns.

Your allusion to the *Yarrow Revisited*—which, as you say, was only 1500 copies—does not bear upon the case, as you will instantly perceive, when you recollect how many thousand copies of my poems have been sold since that publication, and also turn your thoughts to the consequent probability that a proportionate number of those persons who possess the six volumes will complete their set by purchasing the intended volume. In future editions, *The Female Vagrant* will of course be omitted, as a separate piece; but the reprinting it here is indispensable. . . .—Ever yours, WM. WORDSWORTH."

On the 3d February 1842, he wrote to Moxon, saying that he knew that the sale of his works had been very unprofitable to him [Moxon], and that the labour he had bestowed on them was not likely to earn for himself the wages of 2s. a day. "Take that, ye men of the trade, and make the best of it."

"March 27, 1842.

DEAR MR. MOXON,—I write this merely to ask that you would give me an assurance that the four errors of the press pointed out in the three first pages of the poems upon Italy have been, or will be, corrected, according to the directions given in my former letter. A slip of *errata* would not answer, because such things when found in a book are scarcely ever attended to, . . . and I cannot bear the idea that these poems should start with four bits of nonsense, the worse, because not one in twenty would find it out; but the twenty-first, who did find it out, would say, 'What stuff does Mr. Wordsworth write!' You will perhaps have thought that I was splenetic in insisting upon this volume not being sent to the reviewers. It is a thing which I exceedingly dislike, as done seemingly to propitiate.

If any work comes from an author of distinction, they will

be sure to get hold of it, if they think it would serve their purpose to do so. If they be inclined to speak well of it, either from its own merits, or their good opinion of the author in general, sending the book is superfluous; and if they are hostile, it would only gratify the editor's or reviewer's vanity, and set an edge upon his malice. There are secrets of human nature which my turn for dramatic writing (early put aside) taught me; or rather that turn took its rise from the knowledge of this kind with which observation had furnished me.

Mrs. W. protests against all this, and says, if I am to write in such a strain, I had better take the pen into my own hands. —Good-bye; ever faithfully yours, WM. WORDSWORTH."

From the last sentence it will be seen that Mrs. Wordsworth was the poet's amanuensis, and most readers of the letters will probably think that on the point in question she was wiser than her husband.

The next letter, also written to dictation by Mrs. Wordsworth, discloses even more of the same attitude of mind.

"April 1, 1842.

[He hears that 'a very fair sale' of his book is expected, but complains of this 'cold comfort' for one who has wasted so much health and strength in minute corrections which nobody will either thank him for, nor care anything about, and] which wasted health and strength (I now write from his dictation, observe, [adds Mrs. Wordsworth]) might in great part have been recovered, if the profits of this volume would have left me free in conscience to take a recreative trip to Paris or elsewhere. (Such stuff my good husband compels me to write. . . .)"

The letter betrays an impatience at the falling off in the sale of his books, and a semi-querulous state of mind generally, that was unworthy of Wordsworth. On the 3d of April 1842, he writes again:—

“MY DEAR MR. MOXON,—I see no reason for changing my mind about sending to the Reviews. My friend, and present neighbour, Mr. Faber (who has just published a volume with Rivington), tells me that he has not sent his work to the Reviewers; nor is it his habit to do so; though well aware that a favourable review (in the *Quarterly*, for instance) helps sale very considerably. I cannot tolerate the idea of courting the favour, or seeming to do so, of any critical tribunal—in this country—the House of Commons not excepted. . . . I suppose by this time my volume is out. You need not fear its being noticed enough, whether for praise or censure.—Ever sincerely yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.”

In November of this year Wordsworth was on a visit to his son John at Brigham, and the son writes for his father to Mr. Moxon thus:—

“*Brigham, Cockermouth, Nov. 8th, 1842.*

MY DEAR MOXON,— . . . My father, who is here, wishes that the twelve sonnets, composed while the volume of sonnets was going through the press, should be added at the end of the fifth volume, together with a Latin translation of mine, of the two *Odes to May*, and *The Somnambulist* (Latin title ‘*Somnivaga*’), to conclude with the enclosed Latin verses; all in small print (viz. Latin), and not stereotyped. . . . I sent my translations a fortnight ago to my cousin at Harrow, telling him you were in no immediate want of them, I thought, and asking him to correct both my blunders and those of your printers.”

To this letter Wordsworth added, in his own hand—

“Yesterday I saw Mr. Southey. He is better, but . . . in my judgment it would be ruinous to Mr. Southey’s health for him to undertake any task-work whatsoever, as nothing but absolute rest can bring him about. [He had dissuaded Southey from trying to finish a work which he had promised Moxon

to do.] Mrs. S. is convinced it would be very injurious to her husband, and proposed to him to put what he had already done into other hands. I think the same; for he has pretty confident hopes of being able soon to resume his labour. But what is the fact? He sits down to write a common letter, proceeds in the old way for a few lines, and then his nerves fall into disorder, and his head becomes quite confused. Common humanity, therefore, requires that he should be kept from work as much as possible. If Charles Lamb, dear man, had been alive, how gladly would he have done the work for you! I would also have done it to the best of my power, but my eyes will not allow it.—Ever faithfully and affectionately yours,
W. WORDSWORTH."

"*March 23d, 1843.*

DEAR MR. MOXON,—The task of correcting will be over instantly. To-morrow I expect the last of it, and heartily glad am I to be done. If I had foreseen the minute labour which I have had to undergo in correcting these poems, I never would have gone to press with them at all. I actually detest publication, and all that belongs to it; and if these poems do not benefit some minds here and there, I shall reproach myself with playing the fool at my time of life in such a way.

I have had much to commend in the care and attention of Messrs. Bradbury & Evans; * and pray tell them so from me if you should happen to see them.

[He again suggests that no copies of the volume be sent to reviewers or editors of magazines or periodicals whatsoever.] I shall send one myself to Lockhart as a token of private friendship, but not to him as editor of the *Quarterly Review*. I make *no* exception in this matter."

* The printers of his new volume.

“ 4th December 1843.

. . . Mr. Gough requested of me permission to make a Selection * mainly of subjects relating to this county, as it was principally intended for circulation among his own scholars. He was then master of St. Bees School, as he is now of the Free School of Carlisle. I consented without reluctance, subject to your permission.

As there is not a word from *The Excursion*, nor *The White Doe*, nor *Peter Bell*, nor any of the Continental Poems, or the Sonnets, I hope the publication will not hurt our sale.”

“ December 1843.

I have written this morning to a lady † through whom Chambers applied to me for permission to make extracts from my poems for his ‘sicky-paddy,’ ‡ as Coleridge used to call that class of publication. I gave him leave.”

“ 11th March 1844.

. . . Within the last week I have had three letters, one from an eminent High Churchman, and most popular poet, the other from a Quaker, and the third from a Scottish Free Churchman, that prove together how widely the Poems interest different classes of men.”

“ 20th April 1844.

. . . As to the ‘Biographical Notices,’ § they are grossly erroneous; in particular when it is asserted that I was one of the Pantisocratic Society, though it has been publicly declared by Mr. Southey that the project was given up years || before I was acquainted either with Mr. Coleridge, or any one belonging to the scheme. One-half, at least, of what is said of Coleridge, as to the facts of his life, is more or less erroneous; and, drolly enough, he marries me to one of my cousins! He also affirms that my parents were able to send me to college, though one died more than ten years before I went thither, and the other

* From his poems.

† It was Mrs. Fletcher.

‡ Chambers’s *Encyclopædia of English Literature*.

§ In the *Encyclopædia*.

|| Not one year really.

four : but these errors are trifles. The other, as to the Pantisocracy, is a piece of reprehensible negligence.—Ever faithfully yours,
WM. WORDSWORTH."

"*July 21, 1844.*

. . . To-day, as I rode up Ullswater side, while the vapours were 'curling with unconfirmed content' on the mountain-sides, and the blue lake was streaked with silver light, I felt as if no country could be more beautiful than ours ; and certainly there is one point in which our scenery has a striking advantage over that of the greatest parts of the Continent. Our forest trees are preserved from that horrible mutilation which prevails almost everywhere in Italy, and disfigures the Austrian and Bavarian lakes woefully."

"*April 15, 1844.*

. . . I wished you and yours could have been with us last Tuesday when upwards of three hundred children, and nearly half as many adults, were entertained in the grounds and rooms of Rydal Mount. It went off delightfully with music, singing, dancing, etc., young and old, gentle and simple, mingling in everything."

No date.

" . . . Yesterday we had two sons of the poet Burns as visitors."

"*27th Jan. 1845.*

. . . Mr. Robinson, who leaves us to-day, will report to you all I think about your proposal of printing my prose writings in a separate volume."

Speaking of Mr. Quillinan : "As to any literary work of his own, I am sure it would never sell, unless he condescended—which he will never do—to traffic in the trade of praise, with London authorlings, who write in newspapers, magazines, and reviews. . . ."

"*10th April 1845.*

. . . Having long wished that an edition of my Poems should be published without the Prefaces and Supplements,

etc., I submit to you whether that would not be well; printing, however, the prose now attached to the volumes as a portion of the prose volume which you meditate. The Prefaces, etc., contain many important observations upon poetry; but they were written solely to gratify Coleridge; and for my own part, being quite against anything of the kind, and having always been of opinion that poetry should stand upon its own merits, I would not even attach to the Poems any explanation of the grounds of their arrangement.

. . . I can't muster courage to face the fatigue and late dinners of London, and therefore don't think it likely I shall leave home."

"18th April 1845.

An invitation from the Lord Chamberlain to attend the Queen's ball on the 25th May left me without a choice as to visiting London. . . .

I have another favour to ask, which is that you would mention my errand to Mr. Rogers, and perhaps he could put me in the way of being properly introduced, and instructed how to behave in a situation I am sorry to say altogether new to me."

Wordsworth went to Court in Rogers' suit, and must have been a curious spectacle, as the men were of a very different height and size.

On his return from London, he wrote:—

"Rydal Mount, 12th May 1845.

I was enchanted when I came into the Lake District, a little above Bowness, that beautiful romance of Nature. Every object—fields, woods, lakes, mountains, sunshine and shade—seen all the way in the utmost perfection of spring beauty."

"June 1845.

I think I mentioned to you that I had an utter dislike to the print from Pickersgill prefixed to the Poems. It does me, and him also, great injustice. What would be the expense of

an engraving of Chantrey's bust? That I should like infinitely better."

"14th July.

We have had Mr. Bryant, the American poet, and a friend here."

"November 5th, 1845.

I have considered and reconsidered the title [to be given to the new volume of his Poems], and I cannot make up my mind to adhere to any but simply—

The Poems
of
William Wordsworth.

I hope that you won't object to this, bold as it is.
There is a small poem, beginning—

If thou indeed desire thy light from Heaven,

which the printer has been directed to place before the Poems. I mean it to serve as a sort of Preface. All the prose prefaces, and, in fact, all the prose except a few brief notes (printed at the bottom of the pages), will be printed at the end of the volume; it being now my wish that the Poems should be left to speak for themselves, though I did not think it prudent to suppress any considerable portion of the prose."

"25th Nov. 1845.

Miss Martineau called here to-day. She is in excellent health and spirits, very busy with house-building and book-writing, by which latter I hope you will profit. Remember me most kindly to Mr. Rogers and his sister, and to dear old Miss Lamb."

The drawing of Rydal Mount which appears in the 1845 double-column edition of the Poems was done by Miss Fletcher; Chantrey's bust was engraved for the same edition by Mr. Finden. In writing to Mr. Moxon on the 17th November 1845, Wordsworth comments on the print, and adds:—

"The print of the house is faulty as to the porch, and this was probably in consequence of a defect in the drawing, which was not by a professional artist. The porch looks more like a substantial adjunct to the house than trellis-work (which it is), and open in front. Could this effect be given by the engraver? It would be a great improvement,—only a few flowers and plants hanging against and upon the trellis-work. The drawing was taken from a distance, by which all the lower windows are hidden. I should like one to be seen by taking away a few of the boughs which hide it, but perhaps that is impossible. . . ."

"Rydal Mount, Dec. 20, 1845.

. . . Yesterday I had a letter from a gentleman of St. Andrews, unknown to me, who says that he has already given eight copies among his relations and friends, and means to make presents of more in the same way. . . ."

On the 23d February 1846, he mentions the Queen's acknowledgment of a presentation copy of the Poems, and Her Majesty's expression of admiration of the verses on the fly-leaf, and her gift of the portraits of her children.

On October 12, of the same year, he refers to Miss Barrett (Elizabeth Barrett Browning).

"Miss Barrett, I am pleased to learn, is so far recovered as to have taken to herself a husband. He is a very able man. Doubtless they will speak more intelligibly to each other than they have yet done to the public."

"Nov. 13, 1846.

I have not alluded to the Lord Rectorship of the Glasgow University. I am glad I was not elected (I knew nothing of having been nominated), as I should have much disliked being compelled to go to Glasgow, and above all things being compelled to make a public exhibition of myself, and to stumble through a speech, a work in which I have had no experience whatever."

CHAPTER XLIV.

DOMESTIC LIFE AND INCIDENTS—1841-1843.

THERE was little to disturb the even tenor of Wordsworth's life at Rydal Mount during the year 1841, except the marriage of his daughter, referred to in a previous chapter.

On the 19th January, he wrote to his friend John Peace, the city librarian at Bristol, thus :—

“Though I can make but little use of my eyes in writing or reading, I have lately been reading Cowper's *Task* aloud ; and in so doing was tempted to look over the parallelisms, for which Mr. Southey, in his edition, was indebted to you. Knowing how comprehensive your acquaintance with poetry is, I was rather surprised that you did not notice the identity of the thought, and accompanying illustrations of it, in a passage of Shenstone's *Ode upon Rural Elegance*, compared with one in *The Task*,* where Cowper speaks of the extinguishable love of the country as manifested by the inhabitants of cities in their culture of plants and flowers, where the want of air, cleanliness, and light is so unfavourable to their growth and beauty. The germ of the main thought is to be found in Horace :—

* See *The Task*, Book IV.—

It is a flame that dies not even there,
compared with Shenstone's *Ode to the Duchess of Somerset*—
Her impulse nothing may restrain.

Nempe inter varias nutritur sylva columnas,
 Laudaturque domus longos quæ prospicit agros ;
 Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.

Lib. i. epist. 10, v. 22.

—Ever, my dear friend, faithfully, your obliged,

WM. WORDSWORTH."

Reference has been made, in the previous chapter, to Wordsworth's visit to the south of England, and to London, after his daughter's marriage. He said to John Peace that he had been "three months and as many weeks absent" from Rydal. Here turned to the north in August. Mrs. Fletcher gives us the following reminiscences of his conversation at the close of that month at Rydal.

"Lancrigg, Easedale, August 26, 1841.

Wordsworth made some striking remarks on Goethe in a walk on the terrace yesterday. He thinks that the German poet is greatly overrated, both in this country and his own. He said, 'He does not seem to me to be a great poet in either of the classes of poets. At the head of the first class I would place Homer and Shakspeare, whose universal minds are able to reach every variety of thought and feeling without bringing their own individuality before the reader. They infuse, they breathe life into every object they approach, but you never find *themselves*. At the head of the second class, those whom you can trace individually in all they write, I would place Spenser and Milton. In all that Spenser writes you can trace the gentle affectionate spirit of the man; in all that Milton writes you find the exalted sustained being that he was. Now in what Goethe writes, who aims to be of the first class, the *universal*, you find the man himself, the artificial man, where he should not be found; so that I consider him a very artificial writer, aiming to be universal, and yet constantly exposing his individuality, which his character was not of a

kind to dignify. He had not sufficiently clear moral perceptions to make him anything but an artificial writer."

Mrs. Fletcher's daughter Lady Richardson's Memoranda, dated two days later, are as follows :—

"*August 28th, 1841.*—Mr. Wordsworth, Miss Fenwick, and Mr. Hill came to dine, and it rained on the whole day, but happily the poet talked on from two to eight without being weary, as we certainly were not. After dinner, when we came to the drawing-room, the conversation turned on the treatment of Wordsworth by the reviews of the day. I had never heard him open out on it before, and was much struck with the manner in which he did it ; from his present elevation looking calmly back on the past, and at the same time feeling that an irreparable injury had been done to him, at the time when life and hope were young. As nearly as I can I shall record his words as they were spoken. He said :—

'At the time I resolved to dedicate myself to poetry, and separate myself from the ordinary lucrative professions, it would certainly have been a great object to me to have reaped the profits I should have done from my writings, but for the stupidity of Mr. Gifford and the impertinence of Mr. Jeffrey. It would have enabled me to purchase many books which I could not obtain, and I should have gone to Italy earlier, which I never could afford to do until I was sixty-five, when Moxon gave me a thousand pounds for my writings. This was the only kind of injury Mr. Jeffrey did me, for I immediately perceived that his mind was of that kind that his individual opinion on poetry was of no consequence to me whatever, that it was only by the influence his periodical exercised at the time, in preventing my poems being read and sold, that he could injure me ; for, feeling that my writings were founded on what was true and spiritual in human nature, I knew the time would come when they must be known, and I never therefore

felt his opinion of the slightest value, except in preventing the young of that generation from receiving impressions which might have been of use to them through life. I say this, I hope, not in a boasting spirit, but I am now daily surprised by receiving letters from various places at home and abroad expressive of gratitude to me, from persons I never saw or heard of. As this occurs now, I may fairly conclude that it might have been so when the poems appeared, but for the tyranny exercised over public opinion by the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews*.”

Another of Lady Richardson’s Memoranda, of which only the date of the month is given, refers, I think, to the year 1842.

“Tuesday, the 2d of May, Wordsworth and Miss F. came early to walk about, and dine. He was in a very happy, kindly mood. We took a walk on the terrace, and he went as usual to his favourite points. On our return he was struck with the berries on the holly-tree, and said, ‘Why should not you and I go and pull some berries from the other side of the tree, which is not seen from the window? and then we can go and plant them in the rocky ground behind the house.’ We pulled the berries, and set forth with our tool. I made the holes, and the poet put in the berries. He was as earnest and eager about it as if it had been a matter of importance; and as he put the seeds in, he every now and then muttered, in his low solemn tone, that beautiful verse from Burns’s *Vision*—

And wear thou this, she solemn said,
And bound the holly round my head.
The polished leaves and berries red
Did rustling play;
And like a passing thought she fled
In light away.

He clambered to the highest rocks in the ‘Tom Intak,’* and put in the berries in such situations as Nature sometimes does

* “Intak” is a north-country word for “enclosure.”

with such true and beautiful effect. He said, 'I like to do this for posterity. Some people are selfish enough to say, What has posterity done for me? but the past does much for us.' "

In 1842 Wordsworth's *Sonnets on the Punishment of Death* first appeared in Sir Henry Taylor's article in the *Quarterly Review*.

Writing to John Peace, February 23d, Wordsworth said: "Your *Descant* amused me, but I must protest against your system, which would discard punctuation to the extent you propose. It would, I think, destroy the harmony of blank verse when skilfully written. What would become of the pauses at the third syllable followed by an *and*, or any such word, without the rest, which a comma, when consistent with the sense, calls upon the reader to make, and which being made, he starts with the weak syllable that follows, as from the beginning of a verse? I am sure Milton would have supported me in this opinion. Thomson wrote his blank verse before his ear was formed as it was when he wrote the *Castle of Indolence*, and some of his short rhyme poems. It was, therefore, rather hard in you to select him as an instance of punctuation abused.

I am glad that you concur in my view on the punishment of death. An outcry, as I expected, has been raised against me by weak-minded humanitarians. What do you think of one person having opened a battery of nineteen fourteen-pounders upon me, *i.e.* nineteen sonnets, in which he gives himself credit for having blown me and my system to atoms? Another sonneteer has had a solitary shot at me from Ireland.—Ever faithfully yours,
W. WORDSWORTH.

In the end of May 1842, we find the poet in London,

visiting the Hoares at Hampstead. Haydon records in his Diary :— *

“ *May 22d*, 1842.—Wordsworth called to-day, and we went to church together. There was no seat to be got at the chapel near us, belonging to the rectory of Paddington, and we sat among publicans and sinners. I determined to try him, so advised our staying, as we could hear more easily. He agreed like a Christian; and I was much interested in seeing his venerable white head close to a servant in livery, and on the same level. The servant in livery fell asleep, and so did Wordsworth.”

More interesting is the record in the Journal of Caroline Fox :—

“ *Hampstead, June 4*, 1842.†—Gurney Hoare brought us the good news that William Wordsworth was staying at old Mrs. Hoare’s; so thither he took us. He is a man of middle height and not of very striking appearance, the lower part of the face retreating a little; his eye of a somewhat French diplomatic character, with heavy eyelids, and none of the flashing which one connects with poetic genius. When speaking earnestly, his manner and voice become extremely energetic; and the peculiar emphasis, and even accent, he throws into some of his words add considerably to their force. He evidently loves the monologue style of conversation, but shows great candour in giving due consideration to any remarks which others may make. His manner is simple, his general appearance that of the abstract thinker, whom his subject gradually warms into poetry. Now for some of these subjects :—

Mamma spoke of the beauty of Rydal, and asked whether it did not rather spoil him for common scenery. ‘Oh no,’ he said, ‘it rather opens my eyes to see the beauty there is in all :

* Vol. iii. p. 218.

† *Journals of Caroline Fox*, vol. i. pp. 302-6.

God is everywhere, and thus nothing is common or devoid of beauty. No, madam, it is the *feeling* that instructs the *seeing*. Wherever there is a heart to feel, there is also an eye to see. Even in a city you have light and shade, reflections, probably views of the water and trees, and a blue sky above you, and can you want for beauty with all these? People often pity me while residing in a city, but they need not, for I can enjoy its characteristic beauties as well as any.' I said that Lamb's rhapsody on London might not then have been sent to him in a spirit necessarily ironical. 'Oh no,' he answered, 'and Lamb's abuse of the country and his declared detestation of it was all affected; he enjoyed it and entered into its beauties; besides, Lamb had too kindly and sympathetic a nature to detest anything.' Barclay asked him about Hartley Coleridge. He thinks that there is much talent but no genius in his poetry, and calls him an eminently clever man. One thing he has learnt: that poetry is no pastime, but a serious earnest work, demanding unspeakable study. 'Hartley has no originality; whenever he attempts it, it is altogether a mistake; he is so fond of quaintness and contrariety, which is quite out of keeping with a true poet; and then he is of that class of extreme radicals who can never mention a Bishop or a King, from King David downward, without some atrabilious prefix or other. Surely this is excessively narrow and excessively vain, to put yourself in opposition to the opinions and institutions which have so long existed with such acknowledged benefit; there must be something in them to have attracted the sympathies of ages and generations. I hold that the degree in which poets dwell in sympathy with the past marks exactly the degree of their poetical faculty. Shelley, you see, was one of these, and what did his poetry come to?' 'But,' said I, 'some would not be true to themselves unless they gave a voice to their yearnings after the ideal rather than the actual.' 'Ah, but I object to the perpetual ill-humour with things

around them,' he replied; 'and ill-humour is no spiritual condition which can turn to poetry. Shakspeare never declaimed against Kings or Bishops, but took the world as he found it.'

He spoke of S. T. Coleridge, and the want of will which characterised both him and Hartley; the amazing effort which it was to him to will anything was indescribable; but he acknowledged the great genius of his poetry. Talked of superstition, and its connection with a young state of society; 'Why, we are all children; how little we know! I feel myself more a child than ever, for I am now in bondage to habits and prejudices from which I used to be free.' Barclay quoted Emerson's advice to imitate the independence of the schoolboy, who is sure of his dinner, which greatly pleased him.

We got, I forget how, to the subject of the Divine permission of Evil, which he said he has always felt the hardest problem of man's being. When four years old he had quaked on his bed in sharp conflict of spirit on this subject. 'Nothing but Faith can keep you quiet with such awful problems pressing on you,—faith that what you know not now, you will know in God's good time. It is curious, in that verse of St. Paul's, about Faith, Hope, and Charity (or love), that Charity should be placed the highest of the three; it must be because it is so universal and limitless in its operations; but faith is the highest individual experience, because it conquers the pride of the understanding—man's greatest foe. Oh, how this mechanical age does battle against the faith: it is altogether calculated to puff up the pride of the understanding, while it contains no counteracting principle which can regulate the feelings. The love of the beautiful is lost in notions of shallow utility, and men little think that the thoughts which are embodied in form around them, and on which the peasant's shoon can trample, are worth more than all their steam-engines and railroads.' 'But this cannot last, there must be a reaction,' said I.

‘No,’ he said, ‘it cannot last; God loves His earth, and it cannot last. I have raised my voice loudly against it, particularly in the poem* on the treaty of Cintra; and others have taken it up, and under many forms have given the world to know that there are thoughts in man by which he holds communion with his God, of far higher moment than any outward act or circumstance whatever.’”

Returning to Haydon’s Diary we find the following memoranda:—

“*June 14th, 1842.*†—Out on business; saw dear Wordsworth, who promised to sit at three. Wordsworth sat and looked venerable, but I was tired with the heat and very heavy, and he had an inflamed lid, and could only sit in one light—a light I detest, for it hurts my eyes. I made a successful sketch. He comes again to-morrow.

We talked of our merry dinner with C. Lamb and John Keats. He then fell asleep, and so did I nearly, it was so hot: but I suppose we are getting dozy.

16th.—Wordsworth breakfasted early with me, and we had a good sitting. He was remarkably well, and in better spirits, and we had a good set-to.

I had told him Canova said of Fuseli, ‘*Ve ne sono in gli arte due cose, il fuoco e la fiamma.*’ ‘He forgot the third,’ said Wordsworth, ‘and that is *il fumo*, of which he had plenty.’

His knowledge of Art is extraordinary. He detects errors in hands like a connoisseur or artist. We spent a very pleasant morning. We talked again of our old friends, and to ascertain his real height I measured him, and found him, to my wonder, eight heads high, or 5 ft. 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ in., and of very fine, heroic pro-

* See the two sonnets written in 1808, vol. iv. pp. 207-8.

† *Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, vol. iii. p. 223.

portions. He made me write them down, in order, he said, to show Mrs. Wordsworth my opinion of his proportions.

The time came, and he went wishing me prosperity, and blessing me with all his honest heart."

Wordsworth returned to the north in the beginning of June. In July he received the following letter from the author of *The Christian Year*, who had been travelling in the Lake District, and had received some directions from Wordsworth what to see and to do.

"Lodore, July 18, 1842.

MY DEAR SIR,—I return the tract you lent me with many thanks, and should hope that it might be of good use in directing men's attention to those old views at which they point, and in helping to convince them that they are not the capricious dream of a modern party.

We cannot tell how to thank you enough for your great kindness to us, and Mrs. Wordsworth's! Among other things, your mention of Lodore has proved of the greatest use to us; we came on straight here from Keswick, and found everything very comfortable, and the masses of mountain around us have been putting on great variety of colours to entertain us. We went twice to church yesterday by water, and admired the new church on the whole very much. To-day we have been to Seathwaite, and sitting under the four yew-trees, and my wife liked it so well, and feels so strong, that we are going to get ponies, and try to pass into Wastdale to-morrow, if the weather continues fine. There is something of adventure in this, which reconciles us to entering the dale at the wrong end. We halted at Wytheburn on Saturday, and she made a little sketch for the Waggoner's sake. Indeed, you are our constant companion here, both in prose and verse, and I only wish I had more eyes, and mind, and time to profit by your help. With our best compliments and thanks to Mrs. Wordsworth, believe me, my dear sir, respectfully and gratefully yours, J. KEBLE."

One of the objects of Wordsworth's visit to London will be seen from a letter he wrote on his return to Mr. Gladstone in June. For some time past the duties of the office of Stamp Distributor had been partly discharged by the poet's son as his father's deputy at Carlisle. Wordsworth was now anxious that the office itself, with all its duties and emoluments, should be transferred to his son. This required some negotiation both with Lord Lonsdale and the Government officials in town. What Wordsworth did is best explained in his own words.

“ Rydal Mount, June 28, [1842].

MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,—I left London for the north last Thursday week, and have been waiting for something definitive before I could with propriety write to you. Upon quitting you after our last interview I called upon Lord Lonsdale, and put Lord Monteagle's paper into his hands; his Lordship was then inclined to forward it to Sir Robert Peel as soon as he should receive from me certain notices, with which I wished it to be accompanied. These I could not accurately give till I came home. When I was about to forward them to Lord L., I was informed from his Lordship that he had particular reasons for not moving in the matter for some little time, and expressed a hope that I should be satisfied with this decision. To this I replied that I submitted willingly to his judgment, and repeated what I had said to him in conversation, that I never wished Sir Robert Peel should be formally solicited to grant me a Government pension, but merely that he should early be made acquainted with the fact, that the annual sacrifice which I had made, upon his kind compliance with my desire that the office I held should be transferred to my son, amounted to upwards of £400, being more than half of my income. I was rather anxious that Sir Robert should know this as early as could be done with propriety, because the sum appropriated for the recompense of persons thought deserving is [limited],

and might altogether be forestalled. Further, as I have reached my seventy-third year, there is not much time to lose if I am thought worthy of being benefited.

Under these circumstances, dear Sir, I leave it to your judgment how to proceed, being fully assured that nothing will be done by you without the most delicate well-weighed consideration of persons and circumstances.

Pray give me a moment to say whether you would wish to have Lord Monteagle's paper which has been returned to me by Lord Lonsdale. Pray present my compliments to Mrs. Gladstone, and believe me to be, my dear Sir, faithfully your much obliged,

WM. WORDSWORTH."

Again, on the 11th of July, he wrote to Mr. Gladstone as follows :—

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,—With many thanks for your kind letter I now enclose Lord Monteagle's letter, which I deferred doing, in the hope,—a faint one, I confess,—that I might hear through Lord Lonsdale, or otherwise, something relative to the matter in which you have been so good as to take an interest.

It is apparent from the newspapers that the sum appropriated to that class of pensions has been exhausted during the course of last year, so that there is no surplus for the year ensuing; and this is, coupled with my advanced age, a strong reason why time should not be lost in reminding Sir Robert Peel of me. Nevertheless, after what has passed between Lord Lonsdale and myself, and which you are acquainted with, I do not like to resume the subject with his Lordship. If, therefore, an occasion should occur which you think favourable, I leave it to your judgment to do as you think best; trusting that I shall stand free of any charge of indelicacy to Lord L., if I wish also to profit by your friendly dispositions, as might

be more likely to fall in your way, from your relation to the present Government.

The movements of the Stamp Office have been rather slow in respect to the transfer of the stamps under my charge, so that I cannot yet regard my son as standing exactly in my late position; as soon as the Head Office has authorised me to do this, I shall think it my duty to thank Sir Robert Peel for his compliance with my request—I having as yet only left a card at his house when in town. . . .

Mrs. Wordsworth joins me in kind respects to yourself and Mrs. Gladstone, and believe me, my dear Sir, faithfully your much obliged,
WM. WORDSWORTH."

On the 7th of August the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, wrote to Wordsworth from Whitehall:—

"MY DEAR SIR,—It is some compensation for the severe toil and anxiety of public life to have, occasionally, the opportunity of serving or gratifying those who are an honour to their country.

My son speaks with the greatest delight of the means he has had of recommending himself to your kind notice.

With cordial wishes that every blessing may attend your remaining years, believe me, my dear Sir, most faithfully yours,
ROBERT PEEL."

On the 13th October Wordsworth wrote thus to Mr. Gladstone:—

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE, . . . If I should not succeed in obtaining what you have so kindly endeavoured to assist in procuring for me, I must be content; and should the pension come it would be welcome, both as a mark of public approbation, and preventing for the future the necessity of my looking more nearly to my expenditure than I have been accustomed to do. At all events I shall ever retain a grateful and most

pleasing remembrance of your exertions to serve me upon this occasion; nor can I fail to be much gratified by the recollection of Sir R. Peel's favourable opinion of my claims. . . .— Believe me, my dear Mr. Gladstone, faithfully your much obliged,
WM. WORDSWORTH."

On the 15th October Sir Robert Peel wrote to Wordsworth from Whitehall:—

"MY DEAR SIR,—I trust you will permit me to exercise in your favour a privilege which office confers, and which will, so exercised, give to its possessor unalloyed satisfaction.

It is my duty to recommend to Her Majesty the appropriation of a limited fund which Parliament has placed at the disposal of the Crown, on the condition, that it shall be applied to the reward and encouragement of public service, or of eminent literary or scientific merit.

The total amount which I have free from absolute engagement does not exceed six hundred pounds per annum, and I feel convinced that I cannot apply a moiety of that sum in a manner more in accordance with the spirit and intentions with which the grant to the Crown has been made, than by placing (with your sanction) your honoured name on the Civil List, for an annual provision of three hundred pounds, to endure during your life.

I need scarcely add, that the acceptance by you, of this mark of favour from the Crown, considering the grounds on which it is proposed, will impose no restraint upon your perfect independence, and involve no obligation of a personal nature.—Believe me, my dear Sir, with true esteem, most faithfully yours,
ROBERT PEEL."

On the 17th October Wordsworth wrote to Mr. Gladstone from Rydal:—

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,—I do not lose a moment in letting you know that Sir Robert Peel has made me an offer of

a pension of £300 per annum for my life, and in terms which have above measure enhanced the satisfaction I feel upon the occasion. I will not run the risk of offending you by a renewal of thanks for your good offices in bringing this about, but will content myself with breathing sincere and fervent good wishes for your welfare.—Believe me, my dear Mr. Gladstone, faithfully yours,
WM. WORDSWORTH."

From the foregoing correspondence it is partly seen that it was to Mr. Gladstone that Wordsworth owed his pension of £300 from the Civil List. A paper of "Memoranda on Mr. Wordsworth's circumstances" by Mr. Gladstone, of date October 11th and 12th, 1842, which he has kindly sent me, makes it clear that it was to his kindness, and his influence, that the official recognition of the claim which the aged poet had to this money grant was entirely due. When we remember that for years Wordsworth and his sister lived at Grasmere on £70 a year, and that his available income in 1842, including the annuity of £100 from Sir George Beaumont, was not more than £300 a year, that his sister was a permanent invalid at Rydal, and that the depression in the book trade was great, and the returns from the poet's works were scanty, it will not be thought an extravagant arrangement for the Premier to propose, and to carry out, that this small fund at his disposal should be divided, and that the one-half of it should be given to Wordsworth.

The following extract from the *Reminiscences of Yarrow*,* by Dr. James Russell, tells us something of Wordsworth in the autumn of 1842:—

"In September 1842, I was staying at the hotel at Ambleside; and before leaving, it occurred to me to take a walk in the direction of Rydal Water. It was a lovely forenoon; and, lured by the beauty of the scenery, I sauntered on till I was

* See *Reminiscences of Yarrow*, by James Russell, D.D., pp. 230-4.

close on Rydal Mount. A feeling of regret arose that I had not asked a letter of introduction to the poet from the widow of the Ettrick Shepherd, still resident in my parish, and at whose request I had written an intimation of the Shepherd's death to Wordsworth. It was too late, however, for that; and I thought—'Well, if I cannot see the bard himself, I should like to have a look at this "Poet's Corner," where he has so long taken up his abode.' I accordingly knocked at the lodge, and asked if there would be any objections to my taking a walk in the grounds. The keeper said very politely that if I would send in my name I would get permission at once; to which I replied that if that was necessary I would not disturb the family, as I was an entire stranger. By way of compensation, I wandered up the hill behind, where I had a charming view of the premises, as well as of the two valleys and sheets of water—Windermere and Rydal. On descending, I saw a party of three pacing slowly up and down the approach that led to the cottage. I recognised the venerable poet at once—then, I think, in his seventy-second year—from his resemblance to a medallion I had often seen of him on a silver snuff-box of Professor Wilson's. The two others were his wife and one of his sons. I watched the garden-parade till a servant appeared with a wheelbarrow and luggage, which was taken down to the public road, along which the mail-coach was soon expected to pass. The family party accompanied it, while I followed at a respectful distance. Mrs. Wordsworth and her son went to make a call at a cottage, while the old man stood guard over the luggage. Now or never, thought I; there is an opportunity of exchanging a few words with this great man.

Accordingly, plucking up courage, I stepped forward and said, 'Mr. Wordsworth, I have no right to intrude upon you, for I have no letter of introduction, but I come from a part of the country which you know something about.'

‘Where is that, sir?’

‘I come from Yarrow; or rather, I should say, I am the minister of Yarrow.’

‘To me, my dear sir, that is the best of all introductions,’ was the hearty answer, while he warmly shook my hand. ‘Yarrow; a name that will be ever dear to me. I have written some small things about that pastoral valley, which you may have come across in the course of your reading.’

I instantly rejoined—

‘Oh, Mr. Wordsworth, who has not read those exquisite poems of yours, that have doubled the charm which had gathered round our classic “Braes” before?’ . . . He then described his coming, in 1803, to Clovenfords and Melrose, where he had a tryst with Scott, but had not time to turn aside to the tributary stream. His feelings of regret found expression in *Yarrow Unvisited*. ‘That,’ I remarked, ‘is now a long time ago—forty years, save one!’

‘Yes,’ he replied; ‘just forty years, save one! and what changes since!’

He proceeded to speak of the time when his long-cherished dream, many years afterwards, was realised, and to tell me in the substance, if not the words, of his own stanza—

When first, descending from the moorlands,
I saw the stream of Yarrow glide
Along a bare and open valley,
The Ettrick Shepherd was my guide.

He spoke of Hogg’s poetry, of the primitive cottage in which he dwelt, his old father, who lived with him, of some of whose peculiarities Scott had told him. I was able to give him in return full particulars of Mrs. Hogg, and her family at Altrive Lake, in which he was greatly interested. Resuming the thread of his story, he proceeded, with much emotion, to portray his last visit: ‘I had come down with my daughter to Abbotsford, to take farewell of Sir Walter, just before his setting out

on his journey to the Continent, from which he returned to die. We spent two days with him ; and, according to his wont with visitors for that period, the first day's excursion was to Melrose, the next to Newark. It was then and there the idea occurred to me of *Yarrow Revisited*. It was a most interesting but in many respects a melancholy visit. Sir Walter was sadly changed from the days of other years. When he got upon his old stories, he told them very much with his former humour and zest, but the story was no sooner over than the cloud closed in on that noble intellect. He gave my daughter, ere we parted, a book of poetry (Crabbe's, I think), and I said : " Now, Sir Walter, you must enhance the gift by writing your name on the volume." He did so ; but the dear old man made a mistake in spelling his own name.'

We then talked of the various Lake poets ; of Southey's great grief and domestic affliction ; among the rest, of Professor Wilson. I mentioned that I had been one of his students ; that I had just been reading his *éloge* on Burns in an essay introductory to an edition of his works ; and that while it was most appreciative of the genius of the poet, I thought it was too apologetic of his errors. ' Yes, I love Wilson as a son, but his essay is too much of a whitewashing of Burns ; and I regret it all the more for its influence on young men, coming as it does from your Professor of Moral Philosophy. When I was in the land of Burns, I heard, on the best authority, that his death was brought on by lying out all night exposed, after being at a drunken convivial party. I, too, in my time, have written two poems on Burns,* and spoken of him with the reverence due to the genius of a great man, but without attempting to conceal his faults.'

All the time of our wayside interview the poet stood in close juxtaposition to me, speaking, as it were, into my ear, which

The poems *At the Grave of Burns* and *To the Sons of Burns*.

was due, I believe, to his failing sight. After more talk on other topics, I took leave of him by saying, 'I fear, Mr. Wordsworth, now that your tuneful brethren all are fled, the Forest Sheriff gone,

And death upon the Braes of Yarrow,
Has closed the shepherd poet's eyes,

there will be little inducement to visit these Forest scenes again; but if you do, I trust you will make the manse of Yarrow your home, and take the minister of Yarrow as your guide.' To which he kindly replied, 'I do hope some time or other to renew my acquaintance with that classic ground, with which I have so many dear associations; and I won't fail to take advantage of your proffered hospitality.' He then, with a hearty grasp of the hand, bade me adieu."

Extracts from two letters written shortly after this visit of Mr. Russell to Westmoreland by the widow of the Master of Rugby, and referring to the Wordsworth family in 1842, cast light on the Rydal household, and may recall the poet's sonnet on Lady Fitzgerald beginning—

Such age, how beautiful !

On December 9th, 1842, Mrs. Arnold wrote from Fox How to her friend Miss Trevenen: "The Wordsworths are well, and as delightful a picture of old age as you can imagine; happy in themselves, and by their loving kindness and benevolence ever contributing to the happiness of others. I was very much pleased the other day to make him and Archbishop Whately acquainted with each other. They met here first, and afterwards I called with the Archbishop at the Mount, when the poet had the pleasure of lionising his favourite haunts to the stranger."

Again, on March 10, 1843: "Our dear kind friends, the Wordsworths, continue wonderfully well, and full of vigour, and are as delightful a specimen of the happy and peaceful and healthful approach of old age as I can imagine. How sad

is the contrast at Keswick, where poor Mr. Southey is reduced to such a state of bodily infirmity, and the mental wreck is so entire that many of those who love him best will be thankful to hear the last painful scene is over."

On the 21st of March 1843, Southey died at Greta Hall, Keswick; and a few days later, "on a dark and stormy morning," Wordsworth crossed from Rydal to his funeral at Crosthwaite Parish Church. Few, except his own family, Wordsworth, and Quillinan his son-in-law, were present.

On the 3d of March, Wordsworth received a letter from the Lord Chamberlain, Earl De la Warr, telling him that he had recommended the Queen to offer to him the post of Poet Laureate, which Southey had held, and that her Majesty had been graciously pleased to approve of the recommendation. To this Wordsworth replied that the recommendation by the Lord Chamberlain, and the approval of it by her Majesty, afforded him "high gratification," and he was very sensible of the honour, especially of succeeding his friend Southey; but that at his advanced age, the acceptance of this office would impose duties which he felt he could not adequately discharge, and that, therefore, he felt that he ought to decline the honour, which he would always remember with pride. The Lord Chamberlain replied that the duties of the office of Laureate had not recently exceeded the writing of an annual ode, and would in his (Wordsworth's) case be merely nominal. The Prime Minister also wrote him as follows:—

" Whitehall, April 3, 1843.

MY DEAR SIR,—I hope you may be induced to reconsider your decision with regard to the appointment of Poet Laureate.

The offer was made to you by the Lord Chamberlain, with my entire concurrence, not for the purpose of imposing on you any onerous or disagreeable duties, but in order to pay you that tribute of respect which is justly due to the first of living poets.

The Queen entirely approved of the nomination, and there is one unanimous feeling on the part of all who have heard of the proposal (and it is pretty generally known), that there could not be a question about the selection.

Do not be deterred by the fear of any obligations which the appointment may be supposed to imply. I will undertake that you shall have nothing *required* from you.

But as the Queen can select for this honourable appointment no one whose claims for respect and honour, on account of eminence as a poet, can be placed in competition with yours, I trust you will not longer hesitate to accept it.—Believe me, my dear Sir, with sincere esteem, most faithfully yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

I write this in haste, from my place in the House of Commons."

This letter led Wordsworth to accept the offer. He replied to Sir Robert Peel as follows :—

"Rydal Mount, Ambleside, April 4, 1843.

DEAR SIR ROBERT,—Having since my first acquaintance with Horace borne in mind the charge which he tells us frequently thrilled his ear,

Solve senescentem maturè sanus equum, ne
Peccet ad extremum,

I could not but be deterred from incurring responsibilities which I might not prove equal to, at so late a period of life; but as my mind has been entirely set at ease by the very kind and most gratifying letter with which you have honoured me, and by a second communication from the Lord Chamberlain to the same effect, and in a like spirit, I have accepted with unqualified pleasure a distinction sanctioned by her Majesty, and which expresses, upon authority entitled to the highest respect, a sense of the national importance of Poetic Literature; and so favourable an opinion of the success with which

it has been cultivated by one, who, after this additional mark of your esteem, cannot refrain from again assuring you how deeply sensible he is of the many and great obligations he owes to your goodness, and who has the honour to be, dear Sir Robert, most faithfully, your humble servant,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH." *

Another letter belonging (probably) to 1843 may conclude this chapter. To whom it was addressed I know not:—

"April 1st, Rydal Mount.

DEAR SIR,— . . . As I advance in life I feel myself more and more incapable of doing justice to the attempts of young authors. The taste and judgment of an old man have too little of aptitude and flexibility for new things; and I am thoroughly convinced that a young writer cannot do worse than lean upon a veteran. It was not my own habit to look out for such guidance. I trusted to myself, and to the principles of criticism which I drew from the practices of the great poets, and not from any observations made upon their works by professed censors. As you are so intimately acquainted with my poems, and as no change has taken place in my manner for the last forty-five years, you will not be at a loss to gather from them upon what principles I write, and what accordingly is likely to be my judgment of your own performances, either as to subject or style.—I remain, my dear Sir, faithfully your obliged,

WM. WORDSWORTH."

* Quillinan, writing to Crabb Robinson from Belle Isle, Windermere, 23d July 1843, and referring to the office of Poet Laureate, said:—

"It has occurred to me that Mr. Wordsworth may, in his own grand way, compose a hymn to or on the King of kings, in rhymed verse or blank, invoking a blessing on the Queen and country, etc. This would be a new mode of dealing with the office of Laureate, and would come with dignity and propriety, I think, from a seer of Wordsworth's age and character. I told him so; and he made no observation. I therefore think it likely that he may consider the suggestion; but he certainly will not, if he hears that anything of that sort is expected from him."

CHAPTER XLV.

LATER YEARS AT RYDAL.

MRS. FLETCHER'S reminiscences of the poet at Rydal, and of his visits to Lancrigg, with other notes taken by her daughters, Lady Richardson and Mrs. Davy (particularly the former), are by far the most interesting which we possess of the later years of his life. They range from November 1843 to January 1849, and include, amongst other things, Lady Richardson's account of an excursion with the poet to the Duddon Valley in the autumn of 1844. It will be best to give their reminiscences in full by themselves, and to return again to the year 1844.

November 1843.—Wordsworth holds the critical power very low, infinitely lower than the inventive; and he said to-day that if the quantity of time consumed in writing critiques on the works of others were given to original composition, of whatever kind it might be, it would be much better employed; it would make a man find out sooner his own level, and it would do infinitely less mischief. A false or malicious criticism may do much injury to the minds of others; a stupid invention, either in prose or verse, is quite harmless.

December 22d, 1843.—The shortest day is past, and it was a very pleasant one to us, for Wordsworth and Miss Fenwick offered to spend it with us. They came early, and, although it was misty and dingy, he proposed to walk up Easedale. We went by the terrace, and through the little gate on the fell,

round by Brimner Head, having diverged a little up from Easedale, nearly as far as the ruined cottage. He said, when he and his sister wandered there so much, that cottage was inhabited by a man of the name of Benson, a waller, its last inhabitant. He said on the terrace, 'This is a striking anniversary to me; for this day forty-four years ago, my sister and I took up our abode at Grasmere, and three days after we found out this walk, which long remained our favourite haunt.' There is always something very touching in his way of speaking of his sister; the tones of his voice become more gentle and solemn, and he ceases to have that flow of expression which is so remarkable in him on all other subjects. It is as if the sadness connected with her present condition was too much for him to dwell upon in connection with the past, though habit and the 'omnipotence of circumstance' have made its daily presence less oppressive to his spirits. He said that his sister spoke constantly of their early days, but more of the years they spent together in other parts of England than those at Grasmere. As we proceeded on our walk he happened to speak of the frequent unhappiness of married persons, and the low and wretched principles on which the greater number of marriages were formed. He said that unless there was a strong foundation of love and respect, the 'unavoidable breaks and cataracts' of domestic life must soon end in mutual aversion, for that married life ought not to be in theory, and assuredly it never was in practice, a system of mere submission on either side, but it should be a system of mutual co-operation for the good of each. If the wife is always expected to conceal her difference of opinion from her husband, she ceases to be an equal, and the man loses the advantage which the marriage tie is intended to provide for him in a civilised and Christian country. He then went on to say, that, although he never saw an amiable single woman without wishing that she were married, from his strong feeling of

the happiness of a well assorted marriage, yet he was far from thinking that marriage always improved people. It certainly did not, unless it was a congenial marriage. During tea, he talked with great animation of the unfortunate separation of feeling between the rich and the poor in this country. The reason of this, he thinks, is our greater freedom ; that the line of demarcation not being so clearly laid down in this country by the law as in others, people fancy they must make it for themselves. He considers Christian education the only cure for this state of things. He spoke of his own desire to carry out the feeling of brotherhood, with regard to servants, which he had always endeavoured to do."

Lady Richardson's notes contain a different but equally interesting account of the same day.

" *December* 1843.—Wordsworth and Miss Fenwick spent the shortest day of the year with us ; he brought with him his epitaph on Southey,* and as we sat round the fire after dinner, my mother asked him to read it to us, which he did in his usual impressive manner. He asked our impression of it. My mother ventured to tell him of one word, or rather two, which she thought might be altered with advantage. They were these :—

Wide was his range, but ne'er in human breast
Did private feeling find a holier nest.

' Holier nest ' were the words she objected to, as not being a correct union of ideas. He took the suggestion most kindly, and said it had been much discussed in his own mind and in his family circle, but that he saw the force of what she said, and that he was aware many others would see it also. He said there was yet time to change it, and that he should consult Judge Coleridge whether the line, as he once had it,

Did private feeling meet in holier rest,

* See vol. viii. of this edition, pp. 141-6.

would not be more appropriate to the simplicity of an epitaph where you con every word, and where every word is expected to bear an exact meaning. We all thought this was an improvement. . . .”

A month later, Mrs. Davy, Lady Richardson's sister, wrote :—

“ *The Oaks, Ambleside, Monday, Jan. 22, 1844.*

While Mrs. Quillinan was sitting with us to-day, Henry Fletcher ran in to say that he had received his summons for Oxford (he had been in suspense about rooms as an exhibitor at Baliol), and must be off within an hour. His young cousins and I went down with him to wait for the mail in the market-place. We found Mr. Wordsworth walking about before the post-office door, in very charming mood. His spirits were excited by the bright morning sunshine, and he entered at once on a full flow of discourse. He looked very benevolently on Henry, as he mounted on the top of the coach, and seemed quite disposed to give an old man's blessing to the young man entering on an untried field, and then (nowise interrupted by the hurrying to and fro of ostlers with their smoking horses, or passengers with their carpet bags) he launched into a dissertation, in which there was I thought a remarkable union of his powerful diction and his practical thoughtful good sense, on the subject of college habits, and of his utter distrust of all attempts to nurse virtue by an avoidance of temptation. He expressed also his entire want of confidence (from experience, he said) of highly-wrought religious expression in youth. The safest training for the mind in religion he considered to be a contemplating of the character and personal history of Christ. ‘Work it,’ he said, ‘into your thoughts, into your imagination, make it a real presence in the mind.’ I was rejoiced to hear this plain, loving confession of a Christian faith from Wordsworth. I never heard one more earnest, more as if it came out of a devoutly believing heart. . . .”

“The Oaks, March 5, 1844.

On our way to Lancrigg to-day we called at Foxhow. We met Mr. Wordsworth there, and asked him to go with us. It was a beautiful day, one of his very own ‘mild days’ of this month. He kindly consented, and walked with us to meet the carriage at Pelter Bridge. On our drive, he mentioned, with marked pleasure, a dedication written by Mr. Keble, and sent to him for his approval, and for his permission to have it prefixed to Mr. Keble’s new volumes of Latin Lectures on Poetry delivered at Oxford. Mr. Wordsworth said that he had never seen any estimate of his poetical powers, or more especially of his aims in poetry, that appeared to him so discriminating and so satisfactory. He considers praise a perilous and a difficult thing. On this subject he often quotes his lamented friend, Sir George Beaumont, whom, in his intercourse with men of genius, literary aspirants, he describes as admirable in the modesty which he inculcated and practised on this head.”

Returning to Lady Richardson’s notes,—in the following month she gives an interesting account of the celebration of the poet’s seventy-fourth birthday :—

“On Tuesday, April the 9th, 1844, my mother and I left Lancrigg to begin our Yorkshire journey. We arrived at Rydal Mount about three o’clock, and found the tables all tastefully decorated on the esplanade in front of the house. The Poet was standing looking at them with a very pleased expression of face; he received us very kindly, and very soon the children began to arrive. The Grasmere boys and girls came first, and took their places on the benches placed round the gravelled part of the esplanade, their eyes fixed with wonder and admiration on the tables covered with oranges, gingerbread, and painted eggs, ornamented with daffodils, laurels, and moss, gracefully intermixed. The plot soon began to thicken, and

the scene soon became very animated. Neighbours, old and young, of all degrees, ascended to the Mount to keep the Poet's seventy-fourth birthday, and every face looked friendly and happy. Each child brought its own mug, and held it out to be filled with tea, in which ceremony all assisted. Large baskets of currant cakes were handed round, and liberally dispensed; and as each detachment of children had satisfied themselves with tea and cake, they were moved off, to play at hide-and-seek among the evergreens on the grassy part of the Mount. The day was not bright, but it was soft, and not cold, and the scene, viewed from the upper windows of the house, was quite beautiful, and one I should have been very sorry not to have witnessed. It was innocent and gay, and perfectly natural. Miss Fenwick, the donor of the fête, looked very happy, and so did all the Poet's household. The children, who amounted altogether to above 300, gave three cheers to Mr. Wordsworth and Miss Fenwick. After some singing and dancing, and after the division of eggs, gingerbread, and oranges had taken place, we all began to disperse. We spent the night at The Oaks, and set off on our journey the following morning. The gay scene at the Mount often comes before me as a pleasant dream. It is perhaps the only part of the island where such a reunion of all classes could have taken place without any connection of landlord and tenant, or any clerical relation or school direction. Wordsworth, while looking at the gambols on the Mount, expressed his conviction that if such meetings could oftener take place between people of different condition, a much more friendly feeling would be created than now exists in this country between the rich and poor."

In the account which Mrs. Davy gives of a family gathering at The Oaks in July, we have a record of Wordsworth's judgment, in his old age, both of Coleridge and of Scott :—

“ *The Oaks, Ambleside, July 11, 1844.* ”

Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth at dinner, along with our family party. Mr. and Mrs. Price (from Rugby), two aunts of Mrs. P.'s, and her brother, Mr. Rose, a young clergyman (a devout admirer of Wordsworth) joined us at tea. A circle was made as large as our little parlour could hold. Mr. Price sat next to Mr. Wordsworth, and, by design or fortunate accident, introduced some remark on the powers and the discourse of Coleridge. Mr. Wordsworth entered heartily and largely on the subject. He said that the liveliest and truest image he could give of Coleridge's talk was 'that of a majestic river, the sound or sight of whose course you caught at intervals, which was sometimes concealed by forests, sometimes lost in sand, then came flashing out broad and distinct, then again took a turn which your eye could not follow, yet you knew and felt that it was the same river: so,' he said, 'there was always a train, a stream, in Coleridge's discourse, always a connection between its parts in his own mind, though one not always perceptible to the minds of others.' Mr. Wordsworth went on to say that in his opinion Coleridge had been spoilt as a poet by going to Germany. The bent of his mind, which was at all times very much to metaphysical theology, had there been fixed in that direction. 'If it had not been so,' said Wordsworth, 'he would have been the greatest, the most abiding poet of his age. His very faults would have made him popular (meaning his sententiousness and laboured strain), while he had enough of the essentials of a poet to make him deservedly popular in a higher sense.'

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Mr. Price soon after mentioned a statement of Coleridge's respecting himself, recorded in his *Table Talk*, namely, that a visit to the battle-field of Marathon would raise in him no kindling emotion, and asked Mr. Wordsworth whether this was

true as a token of his mind. At first Mr. Wordsworth said, 'Oh! that was a mere bravado for the sake of astonishing his hearers!' but then, correcting himself, he added, 'And yet it might in some sense be true, for Coleridge was not under the influence of external objects. He had extraordinary powers of summoning up an image or series of images in his own mind, and he might mean that his idea of Marathon was so vivid, that no visible observation could make it more so.' 'A remarkable instance of this,' added Mr. Wordsworth, 'is his poem, said to be "composed in the Vale of Chamouni." Now he never was at Chamouni, or near it, in his life.' Mr. Wordsworth next gave a somewhat humorous account of the rise and progress of the *Ancient Marinere*. . . . From Coleridge, the discourse then turned to Scotland. Mr. Wordsworth, in his best manner, with earnest thoughts given out in noble diction, gave his reasons for thinking that, as a poet, Scott would not live. 'I don't like,' he said, 'to say all this, or to take to pieces some of the best reputed passages of Scott's verse, especially in presence of my wife, because she thinks me too fastidious; but as a poet Scott *cannot* live, for he has never in verse written anything addressed to the immortal part of man.' As a prose writer, Mr. Wordsworth admitted that Scott had touched a higher vein, because there he had really dealt with feeling and passion. As historical novels, professing to give the manners of a past time, he did not attach much value to those works of Scott's because he held that to be an attempt in which success was impossible. This led to some remarks on historical writing, from which it appeared that Mr. Wordsworth attaches small value to anything but contemporary history. He laments that Dr. Arnold should have spent so much of his time and powers in gathering up, and putting into imaginary shape, the scattered fragments of the history of Rome.

These scraps of Wordsworth's large, thoughtful, earnest dis-

course seem very meagre as I note them down, and in themselves perhaps hardly worth preserving; and yet this is an evening which those who spent it in his company will long remember. His venerable head, his simple natural and graceful attitude in his arm-chair, his respectful attention to the slightest remarks or suggestions of others in relation to what was spoken of, his kindly benevolence of expression as he looked round now and then on the circle in our little parlour, filled up and enlarged the meaning which is but ill-conveyed in the words as they are now set down."

Lady Richardson's note, evidently of the same evening, though the date she gives is different, is characteristic:—

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"*July 12th*, 1844.—Wordsworth spoke much during the evening of his early intercourse with Coleridge, on some one observing that it was difficult to carry away a distinct impression from Coleridge's conversation, delightful as every one felt his outpourings to be. Wordsworth agreed, but said he was occasionally very happy in clothing an idea in words; and he mentioned one which was recorded in his sister's journal during a tour they all made together in Scotland. They passed a steam-engine, and Wordsworth made some observation to the effect that it was scarcely possible to divest one's-self of the impression on seeing it that it had life and volition. 'Yes,' replied Coleridge, 'it is a giant with one idea.'

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He discoursed at great length on Scott's works. His poetry he considered of that kind which will always be in demand, and that the supply will always meet it, suited to the age. He does not consider that it in any way goes below the surface of things; it does not reach to any intellectual or spiritual emotion; it is altogether superficial, and he felt it himself to be so. His descriptions are not true to nature;

they are addressed to the ear, not to the mind. He was a master of bodily movements in his battle-scenes ; but very little productive power was exerted in popular creations."

Two months later, Lady Richardson accompanied Wordsworth, and other friends, to the Duddon Valley. She thus recorded her impressions of the visit:—

"On Friday, the 6th September 1844, I set off to breakfast at Rydal Mount, it being the day fixed by Mr. Wordsworth for our long-projected excursion to the Valley of the Duddon.

The rain fell in torrents, and it became doubtful whether we should set off or not ; but as it was a thunder-shower we waited till it was over, and then Wordsworth, Mr. Quillinan, Miss Hutchinson, and I set forth in our carriage to Coniston, where we were to find the Rydal Mount carriage awaiting us with Mr. Hutchinson. Wordsworth talked very agreeably on the way to Coniston, and repeated several verses of his own, which he seemed pleased that Serjeant Talfourd had repeated to him the day before. He mentioned a singular instance of T. Campbell's inaccuracy of memory in having actually printed as his own a poem of Wordsworth's, *The Complaint* ; he repeated it beautifully as we were going up the hill to Coniston. On reaching the inn in the village of Coniston, the rain again fell in torrents. At length the carriages were ordered to the door with the intention of our returning home ; but just as they were ready the sun broke out, and we turned the horse's head towards Ulpha Kirk. The right bank of Coniston was all new to me after we passed the village and Old Man of Coniston. The scenery ceases to be bold and rugged, but is very pleasing, the road passing through hazel copses, the openings showing nice little corn-fields and comfortable detached farms, with old uncropped trees standing near them ;

some very fine specimens of old ash-trees, which I longed to transport to Easedale, where they have been so cruelly lopped. The opening towards the sea, as we went on, was very pleasing, but the first striking view of the Duddon was looking down upon it soon after we passed Broughton, where you turn to the right, and very soon after perceive the peculiar beauty of the valley, although it does not take its wild and dreamlike beauty till you pass Ulpha Kirk. We reversed the order of the sonnets, and saw the river first, 'in radiant progress toward the deep,' instead of tracing this 'child of the clouds' from its cradle in the lofty waste. We reached the Kirk of Ulpha between five and six. The appearance of the little farm-house inn at once made anything approaching to a dinner an impossibility had we wished it ever so much; but in due time we had tea and boiled ham, with two eggs apiece, and were much invigorated by this our first Duddonian meal. The hostess was evidently surprised that we thought of remaining all night, so humbly did she think of the accommodation she had to offer. She remembered Mr. Wordsworth sleeping there fifteen years ago, because it was just after the birth of her daughter, a nice comely girl, who attended us at tea. Mr. Quillinan showed great good nature and unselfishness in the arrangements he made, and the care he took of the horse, which I saw him feeding out of a tub, a manger being too great a refinement for Ulpha.

After tea, although it was getting dark, we went to the churchyard, which commands a beautiful view towards Seathwaite, and we then walked in that direction, through a lane where the walls were more richly covered by moss and fern than any I ever saw before. A beautiful dark-coloured tributary to the Duddon comes down from the moors on the left hand, about a mile from Ulpha; and soon after we had passed the small bridge over the stream, Mr. Wordsworth recollected

a well which he had discovered thirty or forty years before. We went off the road in search of it, through a shadowy embowered path ; and, as it was almost dark, we should probably have failed in finding it, had we not met a very tiny boy, with a can of water in his hand, who looked at us in speechless amazement, when the Poet said, ' Is there a well here, my little lad ? ' We found the well, joined the road again by another path, leaving the child to ponder whether we were creatures of earth or air.

Saturday morning was cloudy but soft, and lovely in its hazy effects. When I went out about seven, I saw Wordsworth going a few steps, and then moving on, and stopping again in a very abstracted manner ; so I kept back. But when he saw me, he advanced, and took me again to the churchyard to see the morning effects, which were very lovely. He said he had not slept well, that the recollection of former days and people had crowded upon him, and, most of all, ' my dear sister ; and when I thought of her state, and of those who had passed away, Coleridge, and Southey, and many others, while I am left with all my many infirmities, if not sins, in full consciousness, how could I sleep ? and then I took to the alteration of sonnets, and that made the matter worse still.' Then suddenly stopping before a little bunch of harebell, which, along with some parsley fern, grew out of the wall near us, he exclaimed, ' How perfectly beautiful that is !

Would that the little flowers that grow could live,
Conscious of half the pleasure that they give.'

He then expatiated on the inexhaustible beauty of the arrangements of nature, its power of combining in the most secret recesses, and that it must be for some purpose of beneficence that such operations existed. After breakfast we got into the cart of the inn, which had a seat swung into it, upon which a bolster was put, in honour, I presume, of the Poet Laureate.

In this we jogged on to Seathwaite, getting out to ascend a craggy eminence on the right, which Mrs. Wordsworth admired : the view from it is very striking. You see from it all the peculiarities of the vale, the ravine where the Duddon ‘deserts the haunts of men,’ ‘the spots of stationary sunshine,’ and the homesteads which are scattered here and there, both on the heights and in the lower ground near protecting rocks and craggy steepes. Seathwaite I had a perfect recollection of ; and the way we approached it twenty years ago, from Coniston over Walna Scar, is the way Mr. Wordsworth still recommends as the most beautiful. We went on some distance beyond the chapel, and every new turning and opening among the hills allured us on, till at last the Poet was obliged to exercise the word of command, that we should proceed no further. The return is always a flat thing, so I shall not detail it except that we reached our respective homes in good time ; and I hope I shall never cease to think with gratitude and pleasure of the kindness of my honoured guide through the lovely scenes he has rescued from obscurity, although it happily still remains an unvitiated region, ‘which stands in no need of the veil of twilight to soften or disguise its features : as it glistens in the morning’s sun, it fills the spectator’s heart with gladness.’”

Passages from Lady Richardson’s notes of her subsequent interviews with Wordsworth, from 1844 to 1846, and of her sister’s (Mrs. Davy’s) notes from 1845 to 1849, will be more appreciated in sequence than broken up under the years to which they respectively refer. They are as follows :—

“*November 16.*—My mother and I called at Rydal to see the Wordsworths after their autumnal excursion. We found him only at home, looking in great vigour, and much the better for this little change of scene and circumstance. He spoke with much interest of a communication he had had from a

benevolent surgeon* at Manchester, an admirer of his, who thinks that a great proportion of the blindness in this country might be prevented by attention to the diseases of the eye in childhood. He spoke of two very interesting blind ladies he had seen at Leamington, one of whom had been at Rydal Mount a short time before her 'total eclipse,' and now derived the greatest comfort from the recollection of these beautiful scenes, almost the last she looked on. He spoke of his own pleasure in returning to them, and of the effect of the first view

* The surgeon was Samuel Crompton. The following are extracted from Wordsworth's letters to him:—

“*Rydal Mount, Nov. 14, 1844.*”

DEAR SIR,—On returning home yesterday, I found your letter. The facts are most important, and ought to be circulated all the world over, and highly satisfactory would it be to me to assist in making them known. . . . An edition of my poems in double column or some other cheap form is indeed likely to be published at no distant period, and I might attach to the description of the blind man in *The Excursion* a note such as you desire. Your conjecture concerning that passage is remarkable; Mr. Gough, of Kendal, whom I had the pleasure of knowing, was the person from whom I drew the picture, which is in no respect exaggerated. He was an extraordinary person, highly gifted; and how painful is it to think that in all probability his sight was lost to him by want of the knowledge which you are anxious to circulate. The sadness which the contemplation of blindness always produces was in Mr. Gough's case tempered by admiration and wonder in the most affecting manner. During my late absence I stayed some time at Leamington, and there became acquainted with two blind ladies, the one named Buchanan, and the other Williams; both of them interested me greatly. Mrs. B.'s case was, I apprehend, inflammation of the optic nerve; she suffered from violent pains in the head. Her husband took the round of the German baths, and placed her under the most eminent physicians of the country; but without any benefit. The particulars of Miss W.'s case I could learn, and would transmit them to you if you desire it. She became blind young, as appears from the verses written by her father, which I send you, and is now past middle age—a most intelligent woman.—I remain, dear Sir, with great respect sincerely yours, WM. WORDSWORTH.”

“MY DEAR SIR,— . . . You mention an American review of my poems. There is nothing that I am less disposed to read than things of that kind—in fact, I never look at them, for if fault be found justly, I am too old to mend, and praise I care nothing about.—I remain, my dear Sir, your much obliged,
WM. WORDSWORTH.

Rydal Mount, 3d Jan. 1845.”

from Orrest Head, the point mentioned in his 'unfortunate sonnet, which has,' he said, 'you are aware, exposed me to the most unlooked-for accusations. They actually accuse me of desiring to interfere with the innocent enjoyments of the poor, by preventing this district becoming accessible to them by a railway. Now I deny that it is to that class that this kind of scenery is either the most improving or the most attractive. For the very poor the great God of nature has mercifully spread out His Bible everywhere; the common sunshine, green fields, the blue sky, the shining river, are everywhere to be met with in this country; and it is only an individual here and there, among the uneducated classes, who feels very deeply the poetry of lakes and mountains; and such persons would rather wander about where they like than rush through the country in a railway. It is not, therefore, the poor, as a class, that would benefit morally or mentally by a railway conveyance; while to the educated classes, to whom such scenes as these give enjoyment of the purest kind, the effect would be almost entirely destroyed.'

Wednesday, 20th Nov.—A most remarkable halo was seen round the moon soon after five o'clock to-day; the colours of the rainbow were most brilliant, and the circle was entire for about five minutes.

Thursday.—Mr. Wordsworth dined here with the Balls, Davys, and Mr. Jeffries. Mr. W. spoke with much delight of the moon the day before, and said his servant, whom he called 'dear James,' called his attention to it.

Wednesday, December 18th.—The Wordsworths and Quilins sat two hours with us. He said he thought ——— was mistaken in his view of the danger of Milton's Satan being represented without horns and hoofs; that Milton's conception was as true as it was grand; that making sin ugly was a commonplace notion, compared with making it

beautiful outwardly, and inwardly a hell. It assumed every form of ambition and worldliness, the form in which sin attacks the highest natures.

This day, Sunday, the 9th of February, the snow is again falling fast, but very gently. Yesterday, the 8th, was a beautiful day. We had a very pleasant visit of above an hour from Wordsworth and his wife. He was in excellent spirits, and repeated with a solemn beauty, quite peculiar to himself, a sonnet he had lately composed on 'Young England'; and his indignant burst 'Where then is *old*, our dear old England?' was one of the finest bursts of nature and art combined I have ever heard. My dear mother's face, too, while he was repeating it, was a fine addition to the picture; and I could not help feeling they were both noble specimens of 'dear old England.' Mrs. Wordsworth, too, is a goodly type of another class of old England, more thoroughly English, perhaps, than either of the others, but they made an admirable trio; and Mrs. Wordsworth's face expressed more admiration of her husband in his bardic mood than I ever saw before. He discussed mesmerism very agreeably, stating strongly his detestation of clairvoyance; not only on the presumption of its being altogether false, but supposing it, for argument sake, to be true, then he thinks it would be an engine of enormous evil, putting it in the power of any malicious person to blast the character of another, and shaking to the very foundations the belief in individual responsibility. He is not disposed to reject without examination the assertions with regard to the curative powers of mesmerism. He spoke to-day with pleasure of having heard that Mr. Lockhart had been struck by his lines from a MS. poem, printed in his *Railway-Sonnet* pamphlet.*

* Wordsworth's two letters addressed to *The Morning Post*, on the introduction of a railway into the Lake District, from Kendal to Windermere, were printed in a small pamphlet at Kendal in 1844.

February 24th.—Snow still on the ground. It has never been quite clear of snow since the 27th January. Partial thaws have allowed us to peep out into the world of Ambleside and Rydal; and last Saturday we drank tea at Foxhow, and met the Wordsworths and Miss Fenwick. He is very happy to have his friend home again, and was in a very agreeable mood. He repeated his sonnet on the ‘Pennsylvanians,’ and again that on ‘Young England,’ which I admire so much.

March 6th.—Wordsworth, whom we met yesterday at dinner at The Oaks, expressed his dislike to monuments in churches; partly from the absurdity and falsehood of the epitaphs which sometimes belonged to them, and partly from their injuring the architectural beauties of the edifice, as they grievously did in Westminster Abbey and many other cathedrals. He made an exception in favour of those old knightly monuments, which he admitted added to the solemnity of the scene, and were in keeping with the buildings; and he added, ‘I must also except another monument, which once made a deep impression on my mind. It was in a small church near St. Alban’s; and I once left London in the afternoon, so as to sleep at St Alban’s the first night, and have a few hours of evening light to visit this church. It was before the invention of railways, and I determined that I would always do the same; but, the year after, railways existed, and I have never been able to carry out my project again: all wandering is now over. Well, I went to this small country church; and just opposite the door at which you enter, the figure of the great Lord Bacon, in pure white, was the first thing that presented itself. I went there to see his tomb, but I did not expect to see himself; and it impressed me deeply. There he was, a man whose fame extends over the whole civilised world, sitting calmly, age after age, in white robes of pure alabaster, in this small country church,

seldom visited except by some stray traveller, and he having desired to be interred in this spot, to lie near his mother.'

On referring to Mallet's Life of Bacon, I see he mentions that he was privately buried at St. Michael's Church, near St. Alban's; and it adds, 'The spot that contains his remains lay obscure and undistinguished, till the gratitude of a private man, formerly his servant' (Sir Thomas Meautys), 'erected a monument to his name and memory.' This makes it probable that the likeness is a correct one.

November 8th, 1845.—On our way to take an early dinner at Foxhow yesterday, we met the Poet at the foot of his own hill, and he engaged us to go to tea to the Mount on our way home to hear their adventures, he and his Mary having just returned from a six weeks' wander among their friends. During their absence we always feel that the road between Grasmere and Ambleside is wanting in something, beautiful as it is. We reached the Mount before six, and found dear Mrs. Wordsworth much restored by her tour. She has enjoyed the visit to her kith and kin in Herefordshire extremely, and we had a nice comfortable chat, round the fire and the tea-table. After tea, in speaking of the misfortune it was when a young man did not seem more inclined to one profession than another, Wordsworth said that he had always some feeling of indulgence for men at that age who felt such a difficulty. He had himself passed through it, and had incurred the strictures of his friends and relations on this subject. He said that after he had finished his college course, he was in great doubt as to what his future employment should be. He did not feel himself good enough for the Church; he felt that his mind was not properly disciplined for that holy office, and that the struggle between his conscience and his impulses would have made life a torture. He also shrank from the law, although Southey often told him that he was well fitted for the higher parts of the profession. He had studied military history with great

interest, and the strategy of war; and he always fancied that he had talents for command; and he at one time thought of a military life, but then he was without connections, and he felt if he were ordered to the West Indies his talents would not save him from the yellow fever, and he gave that up. At this time he had only a hundred a year. Upon this he lived, and travelled, and married, for it was not until the late Lord Lonsdale came into possession that the money which was due to them was restored. He mentioned this to show how difficult it often was to judge of what was passing in a young man's mind, but he thought that for the generality of men, it was much better that they should be early led to the exercise of a profession of their own choice.

December 1846.—Henry Fletcher and I dined at the Mount on the 21st of this month. The party consisted of Mr. Crabb Robinson (their Christmas guest), Mrs. Arnold, Miss Martineau, and ourselves. My mother's cold was too bad to allow her to go, which I regretted, as it was, like all their little meetings, most sociable and agreeable. Wordsworth was much pleased with a little notice of his new edition in the *Examiner*; he thought it very well done. He expressed himself very sweetly at dinner on the pleasant terms of neighbourly kindness we enjoyed in the valleys. It will be pleasant in after times to remember his words, and still more his manner when he said this, it was done with such perfect simplicity and equality of feeling, without the slightest reference to self, and I am sure without thinking of himself at the time as more than one of the little circle whose friendly feeling he was commending.

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October 1846.—Wordsworth dined with us one day last week, and was in much greater vigour than I have seen him all this summer.

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He mentioned incidentally that the spelling of our language

was very much fixed in the time of Charles the Second, and that the attempts which had been made since, and are being made in the present day, were not likely to succeed. He entered his protest as usual against ——'s style, and said that since Johnson no writer had done so much to vitiate the English language. He considers Lord Chesterfield the last good English writer before Johnson. Then came the Scotch historians, who did infinite mischief to style, with the exception of Smollett, who wrote good pure English. He quite agreed with the saying that all great poets wrote good prose. He said there was not one exception. He does not think Burns's prose equal to his verse, but this he attributes to his writing his letters in English words, while in his verse he was not trammelled this way, but let his numbers have their own way.

Lancrigg, November.—Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth took an early dinner with us on the 26th of this month. He was very vigorous, and spoke of his majority at Glasgow, also of his reception at Oxford. He told us of an application he had just had from a Glasgow publisher that he should write a sonnet in praise of Fergusson and Allan Ramsay, to prefix to a new edition of those Poets which was about to appear. He intended to reply that Burns's lines to Fergusson would be a much more appropriate tribute than anything he could write; and he went on to say that Burns owed much to Fergusson, and that he had taken the plan of many of his poems from Fergusson, and the measure also. He did not think this at all detracted from the merit of Burns, for he considered it a much higher effort of genius to excel in degree, than to strike out what may be called an original poem. He spoke highly of the purity of language of the Scotch poets of an earlier period, Gavin Douglas, and others; and said that they greatly excelled the English poets, after Chaucer, which he attributed to the distractions of England during the wars of York and Lancaster.

December 25th, 1846.—My mother and I called at Rydal

Mount yesterday early, to wish our dear friends the blessings of the season. Mrs. W. met us at the door most kindly, and we found him before his good fire in the dining-room, with a flock of robins feasting at the window. He had an old tattered book in his hand; and as soon as he had given us a cordial greeting, he said, in a most animated manner, 'I must read to you what Mary and I have this moment finished. It is a passage in the Life of Thomas Elwood.' He then read to us the following extract. . . .*

Wordsworth was highly diverted with the *apology* of the worthy Quaker for *the digression* which has alone saved him from oblivion. He offered to send us the old book, which came a few days after."

Mrs. Davy's notes are as follows:—

"The Oaks, Ambleside, Jan. 15, 1845.

We dined to-day at Rydal Mount. Mr. Wordsworth, during dinner, grave and silent, till, on some remark having been made on the present condition of the Church, he most unreservedly gave his own views; and gave expression, as I have only once heard him give before, to his own earnest, devout, humble feelings as a Christian. In the evening, being led by some previous conversation to speak of St. Paul, he said, 'Oh, what a character that is! how well we know him! How human, yet how noble! How little outward sufferings moved him! It is not in speaking of these that he calls himself wretched; it is when he speaks of the inward conflict. Paul and David,' he said, 'may be called the two Shaksperian characters in the Bible; both types, as it were, of human nature in its strength and its weakness. Moses is grand, but then it is chiefly from position, from the office he had intrusted to him. We do not know Moses as a man, as a brother man.'

April 7, 1846.—I went to the Mount to-day, to pay my

* It was the passage in reference to the origin of *Paradise Regained*.

respects to Mr. Wordsworth on his birthday. I found him and dear Mrs. Wordsworth very happy, in the arrival of their four grandsons. The two elder are to go to Rossall next week. Some talk concerning schools led Mr. Wordsworth into a discourse, which, in relation to himself, I thought very interesting, on the dangers of emulation, as used in the way of help to school progress. Mr. Wordsworth thinks that envy is too likely to go along with this, and therefore would hold it to be unsafe. 'In my own case,' he said, 'I never felt emulation with another man but once, and that was accompanied by envy. It is a horrid feeling.' This 'once' was in the study of Italian, which, he continued, 'I entered on at college along with ——' (I forget the name he mentioned). 'I never engaged in the proper studies of the university, so that in these I had no temptation to envy any one; but I remember with pain that I *had* envious feelings when my fellow-student in Italian got before me. I was his superior in many departments of mind, but he was the better Italian scholar, and I envied him. The annoyance this gave me made me feel that emulation was dangerous for *me*, and it made me very thankful that as a boy I had never experienced it. I felt very early the force of the words, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect," and as a teacher, or friend, or counsellor of youth, I would hold forth no other motive to exertion than this. There is, I think, none other held forth in the gospels. No permission is given to emulation there. . . . There must always be a danger of incurring the passion of vanity by emulation. If we try to outstrip a fellow-creature, and succeed, we may naturally enough be proud. The true lesson of humility is to strive after conformity to that excellence which we never can surpass, never even by a great distance attain to.' There was, in the whole manner as well as matter of Mr. Wordsworth's discourse on this subject, a deep veneration for the will of God concerning us, which I shall long remember with interest and

delight—I hope with profit. ‘Oh! one other time,’ he added, smiling, ‘one other time in my life I felt envy. It was when my brother was nearly certain of success in a foot race with me. I tripped up his heels. This *must* have been envy.’”

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“*Lesketh How, Jan. 11, 1847.*”

In a morning visit by our fireside to-day from Mr. Wordsworth, something led to the mention of Milton, whose poetry, he said, was earlier a favourite with him than that of Shakspeare. Speaking of Milton’s not allowing his daughters to learn the meaning of the Greek they read to him, or at least not exerting himself to teach it to them, he admitted that this seemed to betoken a low estimate of the condition and purposes of the female mind. ‘And yet, where could he have picked up such notions,’ said Mr. W., ‘in a country which had seen so many women of learning and talent? But his opinion of what women ought to be, it may be presumed, is given in the unfallen Eve, as contrasted with the right condition of man before his Maker—

He for God only, she for God in him.

Now that,’ said Mr. Wordsworth earnestly, ‘*is* a low, a very low and a very false estimate of woman’s condition.’ He was amused on my showing him the (almost) contemporary notice of Milton by Wycherly, and, after reading it, spoke a good deal of the obscurity of men of genius in or near their own times. ‘But the most singular thing,’ he continued, ‘is, that in all the writings of Bacon there is not one allusion to Shakspeare.’

Lesketh How, Jan. 10, 1849.

A long fireside visit from Mr. Wordsworth this morning, in highly sociable spirits; speaking much of old days and old acquaintances. He spoke with much regret of Scott’s careless views about money, and said that he had often spoken to him

of the duty of economy, as a means to insure literary independence. Scott's reply always was, 'Oh, I can make as much as I please by writing.' 'This,' said Mr. W., 'was marvellous to me, who had never written a line with a view to profit.' Speaking of his own prose writing, he said that but for Coleridge's irregularity of purpose he should probably have left much more in that kind behind him. When Coleridge was proposing to publish his *Friend*, he (Mr. Wordsworth) offered contributions. Coleridge expressed himself pleased with the offer, but said, 'I must arrange my principles for the work, and when that is done I shall be glad of your aid.' But this 'arrangement of principles' never took place. Mr. Wordsworth added, 'I think my nephew, Dr. Wordsworth,* will, after my death, collect and publish all I have written in prose.'

On this day, as I have heard him more than once before, Mr. Wordsworth—in a way very earnest, and to me very impressive and remarkable—disclaimed all value for, all concern about, posthumous fame."

Wordsworth wrote to Mr. Gladstone from Rydal Mount, on the 21st March 1844 :—

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,—Pray accept my thanks for your *State and Prospects of the Church*, which I have carefully read; and lent it immediately to a neighbouring clergyman. You have approached the subject in a most becoming spirit, and treated it with admirable ability. From scarcely anything that you have said did I dissent, only I felt some little dissatisfaction as to the limits of your Catholicity, for some limits it must have; but probably you acted wisely in not being more precise upon this point. You advert to the formal and open schism of Methodism, but was not that of Disney, and others to which Cowper adverts, in some respects of more importance?

* On another occasion, his nephew remarks, he intimated a desire that his works in prose should be edited by his son-in-law, Mr. Quillinan.

Not as relates to the two or three conspicuous individuals who seceded and became preachers in London, but from its leading the way to the transit of so great a number of Presbyterian Clergy with no small portion of their several congregations into Unitarianism. This occurred all over England, and was I believe especially remarkable in the city of Norwich, though many there took refuge in the Church of England. Happily there is both in the written word of God, and in the constitution of his creature Man, an adequate preservative from that lifeless form of religion ; nevertheless, as it influenced in no small degree what in the Presbyterian and other congregations was called the better educated part of the community, the result was to be lamented, and in some respects more than the schism of the Wesleyans, which turned mainly if not exclusively at first upon the rejection of Episcopal jurisdiction, leaving the great points of Catholic doctrine untouched.

To what you have so justly said upon Tractarianism much in the same spirit might be added. It was a grievous mistake that these Tracts issued from the same place, and were *numbered*, and at the same time anonymous. Upon the mischief that unavoidably attaches to publication without name, especially, you might have added, corporate publications, you have written with much truth and feeling. But the whole proceeding was wrong, and has led to errors, doubts, and uncertainties, shiftings and ambiguities, not to say absolute double-dealing, injurious to readers and perilous to those in whom they originated. First, it has caused the great and pernicious error of the Movement being called the Oxford Movement, as if it *originated* there ; and had sprung up in a moment. But this opinion, which is false in fact, detracts greatly from its dignity, and tends much to narrow and obstruct its range of operation. There is one snare into which it was impossible that writers so combined should not fall, that of the individual claiming support for his opinion from

the body when it suited him so to do, and rejecting it, and resting upon his individuality, when that answered his purpose better.

As to Romanism, having lived much in countries where it is dominant, and being not unacquainted with much of its history, my horror of it, I will not use a milder term, notwithstanding all that I love and admire in that Church, is great indeed. I trust with you that there is small reason for believing that it will ever supplant our Church in this country, but we must never lose sight of its manifold attractions for the two extremes of our artificial society, the opulent and the luxurious, never trained to vigorous thinking, and who have outlived the power of indulging in their excesses,—these on the one hand; and, on the other, the extreme poor, who are greatly in danger of falling under the influence of its doctrines, pressed upon them by a priesthood so constituted.

But as my departed friend Southey said long ago—

Onward in faith, and leave the rest to Heaven.

With a thousand thanks for your valuable tract, and the best of good wishes for your health and welfare,—I remain, with sincere respect and regard, my dear Mr. Gladstone, faithfully yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH."

The following are extracts from the Journals of Caroline Fox :—*

" *August 21st, 1843.*—Aunt Charles sends brilliant accounts of her present environment. Hartley Coleridge on one side, Wordsworth on the other. She says the latter is very sensible and simple about the Laureateship; he speaks of it very kindly, but has quite declined doing any work connected with it on compulsion. He says it is most gratifying to fill the same station that Dryden and Southey have done.

* *Journals of Caroline Fox*, vol. ii. p. 15.

October 6, 1844.*—Anna Maria and I paid a visit to the Wordsworths. He was in great force, and evidently enjoyed a patient audience. He wanted to know how we came from Cornwall, which naturally brought us to railroads, and a short lament over the one they mean to introduce here. He grieves that the ravens and eagles should be disturbed in their meditations, and fears that their endeavours after lyric poetry will be checked. However, he admits that railroads and all the mechanical achievements of this day are doing wonders for the next generation; indeed, it is the appropriate work of this age and this country, and it is doing it gloriously. That anxious money-getting spirit which is a ruling principle in England, and a passion and a law in America, is doing much by exhausting itself; we may therefore look forward with hopeful trust. Nothing excellent or remarkable is done unless the doer lays a disproportionate weight on the importance of his own peculiar work; this is the history of all sects, parties, cliques, and stock-jobbers whatsoever.

He discoursed on the utter folly of sacrificing health to books. No book-knowledge in the world can compensate you for such a loss; nothing can excuse your trifling with health except duty to God or to your neighbour. . . . Then we asked about his Solitary's valley—whether it had a real or only a poetical existence? 'Why, there is such a valley as I have described in that book of *The Excursion*, and there I took the liberty of placing the "solitary."' He gave the outline of a beautiful tour for us amongst the lakes, and assured us that the guides would not treat us to passages from *The Excursion*, as they probably did not know of the existence of such a poem. Told him of our Wednesday evening readings of *The Excursion*. 'I hope you felt much the wiser for it when you had finished,' he said laughingly. When we told him who had

* Vol. ii. pp. 37-44.

been the genius of those bright starry evenings, he said, 'John Sterling! Oh! he has written many very beautiful poems himself; some of them I greatly admire. How is he now? I heard that he was in poor health.' When told—'Dead!' he exclaimed; 'that *is* a loss to his friends, his country, and his age. A man of such learning and piety! So he is gone, and Bowles and Rogers left, who are so much older!' And the poor old man seemed really affected. He said, 'I was just going to have sent him a message by you to say how much I had been admiring his poetry.' I read him the lines—

Regent of poetic mountains,
Drawing from their deepest fountains
Freshness pure and everlasting,
Wordsworth, dear and honoured name,
O'er thee pause the stars, forecasting
Thine imperishable fame,—

which he begged me to transcribe for him. . . .

Talked of the effect of German literature on the English mind. 'We must wait to find out what it is; my hope is, that the good will assimilate itself with all the good in the English character, and the mischievous element will pass away like so much else.' The only special criticism which he offered on German literature was, 'that they often sacrifice truth to originality, and in their hurry to produce new and startling ideas, do not wait to weigh their worth. When they have exhausted themselves, and are obliged to sit down and think, they just go back to the former thinkers, and thus there is a constant revolution without their being quite conscious of it. Kant, Fichte, Schelling; Schelling, Fichte, Kant; all this is dreary work, and does not denote progress. However, they have much of Plato in them, and for this I respect them; the English, with their devotion to Aristotle, have but half the truth; a sound philosophy must contain both Plato and Aristotle.' He talked of the national character of the French and their equalising methods of education. 'It is all

formal military conventional levelling, encouraging in all a certain amount of talent, but cramping the finer natures, and obliging Guizot, and the few other men of real genius—whom God Almighty is too good to leave them entirely destitute of,—to stoop to the common limits, to flatter and conciliate the headstrong ardent unthinking multitude of ordinary men, who dictate to France through the journals which they edit. There is little of large stirring life in politics now, all is conducted for some small immediate ends; this is the case in Germany as well as France. Goethe was amusing himself with fine fancies, when his country was invaded. How unlike Milton, who only asked himself whether he could best serve his country as a soldier or a statesman, and decided that he could fight no better than others, but he might govern them better. Schiller had far more heart and ardour than Goethe, and would not, like him, have professed indifference to theology and politics, which are the two deepest things in man—indeed, all a man is worth, involving duty to God and to man.’

He took us to his terrace, whence the view is delicious; he said, ‘Without those autumn tints it would be beautiful, but with them it is exquisite.’ It had been a wet morning, but the landscape was then coming out with perfect clearness. ‘It is,’ he said, ‘like the human heart emerging from sorrow, shone on by the grace of God.’ We wondered whether the scenery had any effect on the minds of the poorer people. He thinks it has, though they don’t learn to express it in neat phrases, but it dwells silently within them. ‘How constantly mountains are mentioned in Scripture as the scene of extraordinary events; the Law was given on a mountain, Christ was transfigured on a mountain, on a mountain the great act of our redemption was accomplished, and I cannot believe but that when the poor read of these things in their Bibles, and the frequent mention of mountains in the Psalms, their

minds glow at the thought of their own mountains, and they realise it all more clearly than others.'

Thus ended our morning with Wordsworth. . . .

The old man looks much aged; his manner is emphatic, almost peremptory, and his whole deportment is virtuous and didactic."

A letter from Wordsworth on Gray's *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*, written in 1845 to the Rev. John Moultrie, may conclude this chapter:—

"MY DEAR SIR,—My Copy of the Ode, in Gray's own handwriting, has

Ah happy Hills, ah pleasant Shade.

I wonder how Bentley could ever have substituted 'Rills,' a reading which has no support in the context. The common copies read, a few lines below—

Full many a sprightly race.

Gray's own copy—

Full many a smileing.

(For so he spells the word.)

Throughout the whole Poem the substantives are written in Capital Letters. He writes—'Fury-Passions,' and not, as commonly printed, the 'fury-passions.' What is the reason that our modern Compositors are so unwilling to employ Capital Letters?—Believe me, my dear Sir, faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH."

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE END.

IN May 1845 we find Wordsworth in London. He was called up, as he tells us, by a summons, which he could not resist, from the Lord Chamberlain, to attend a State ball! There is something not a little incongruous in the severely simple, almost austere, poet of seventy-five years attending a ceremonial of this kind. But let us hear his friend Haydon's account of it in his Diary:—

“*May 3d, 1845.**—Dear old Wordsworth called, looking hearty and strong. ‘I came up to go to the State ball,’ said he, ‘and the Lord Chancellor (*quære*, Lord Chamberlain?) told me at the ball I ought to go to the levee.’ ‘And will you put on a court dress?’ said I. ‘Why?’ ‘Let me see you, and I’ll write you a sonnet.’ Wordsworth did not like this.

When Wilkie and I were at Coleorton in 1809, Sir George said, ‘Wordsworth may walk in, but I caution you against his democratic principles.’ What would Hazlitt say now? The poet of the lakes in bag-wig, sword, and ruffles!

I have never protested against any of these things, but I have never submitted to them but once, at George IV.’s coronation.

May 16th.— . . . Dined with my dear friend, Serjeant Talfourd. He said Wordsworth went to court in Rogers’s clothes, buckles and stockings, and wore Davy’s sword. Moxon had hard work to make the dress fit. It was a squeeze, but by pulling and hauling they got him in. Fancy the high priest

* *Life of B. R. Haydon*, vol. iii. pp. 302-6.

of mountain and of flood on his knees in a court, the quiz of courtiers, in a dress that did not belong to him, with a sword that was not his own, and a coat which he borrowed."

On the 22d of May, Haydon wrote to him from London :—

"MY DEAR WORDSWORTH,—I wish you had not gone to court. Your climax was the shout of the Oxford Senate House. Why not rest on that? I think of you as Nature's high priest. I can't bear to associate a bag-wig and sword, ruffles and buckles, with Helvellyn and the mountain solitudes.

This is my feeling, and I regret if I have rubbed yours the wrong way.

Talfourd thinks it was a glory to have compelled the court to send for you, but would it not have been a greater for you to have declined it? Perhaps he is right, however. I have not been able to suppress my feelings.—Believe me ever your old friend,
B. R. HAYDON."

In January 1846, Haydon wrote to Wordsworth, asking for some motto for the picture which he had made of the poet ascending Helvellyn. Wordsworth replied :—

"Rydal Mount, Jan. 24th, 1846."*

MY DEAR HAYDON,—I was sorry that I could not give you a more satisfactory answer to your request for a motto to the engraving of your admirable portrait of my ascent towards the top of Helvellyn. Pray let me have a few impressions, when it is finished, sent to Moxon, as I myself think that it is the best likeness, that is, the most characteristic, that has been done of me.—Believe me, dear Haydon, faithfully, your obliged friend,
W. WORDSWORTH."

In January of this year Wordsworth sent a copy of his Poems to the Queen for the Royal Library at Windsor, and

* *Life of B. R. Haydon*, vol. iii. p. 327.

inscribed the following lines upon the fly-leaf. For their republication here, I am indebted to the gracious permission of Her Majesty :—

Deign, Sovereign Mistress! to accept a lay,
No Laureate offering of elaborate art;
But salutation taking its glad way
From deep recesses of a loyal heart.

Queen, Wife, and Mother! may All-judging Heaven
Shower with a bounteous hand on Thee and Thine
Felicity that only can be given
On earth to goodness blest by grace divine.

Lady! devoutly honoured and beloved
Through every realm confided to thy sway;
Mayst thou pursue thy course by God approved,
And He will teach thy people to obey.

As thou art wont, thy sovereignty adorn
With woman's gentleness, yet firm and staid;
So shall that earthly crown thy brows have worn
Be changed for one whose glory cannot fade.

And now, by duty urged, I lay this Book
Before thy Majesty, in humble trust
That on its simplest pages thou wilt look
With a benign indulgence more than just.

Nor wilt thou blame an aged Poet's prayer,
That issuing hence may steal into thy mind
Some solace under weight of royal care,
Or grief—the inheritance of humankind.

For know we not that from celestial spheres,
When Time was young, an inspiration came
(Oh, were it mine!) to hallow saddest tears,
And help life onward in its noblest aim?

W. W.

9th January 1846.

In March 1846, Wordsworth received information from his friend, Sir W. Rowan Hamilton, that he had been elected an honorary member of the Royal Irish Academy. He acknowledged it thus:—

“*Rydal Mount, March 14, 1846.**”

MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,—Having just received from you a notification that the Royal Irish Academy has conferred upon me the distinction of electing me an Honorary Member of their body, I beg you will express to the Council and to the Academy my deep sense of the honour of being admitted into a society so eminent for Science and Literature; let me add that the interest I have always taken in the sister country, and in everything calculated to promote its welfare, greatly enhances the gratification afforded me by this act of the Academy.

The diploma to which you refer has not yet reached me, or I should, of course, have acknowledged it. As the matter stands, this answer to your notification will, I hope, arrive in time to be read by you to the Academy before you resign the Chair, and be accepted by their courtesy in place of a more formal acknowledgment. I cannot conclude without expressing my sincere regret that the Society is about to lose the benefit of your services as President, and the honour of having your name at its head. It is impossible that any personal consideration could have made the honour which I now acknowledge more acceptable than its having been proposed by one holding so high a position as you do in the scientific and literary world, and filling an equally high place in the private regards of your friends, among whom I have long thought it a great happiness to be numbered.—Believe me, my dear Sir William, ever most faithfully your much obliged,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.”

In 1846, the students of the University of Glasgow tried to

* *Life of Sir W. Rowan Hamilton*, vol. ii. p. 512.

honour the aged poet by electing him as their Rector. He had a majority of twenty-one votes over the Premier, Lord John Russell; but the vote of the Sub-Rector carried his opponent into office. It was as well that he was not chosen, as the duty of writing a Rectorial Address would have been an irksome task to a man of seventy-six, and Wordsworth could scarcely have *talked* to the students, in the grand soliloquising style, which made Carlyle's address at Edinburgh so impressive in 1866.

In the beginning of the following year, January 1847, his eldest son, William, was married to Miss Fanny Eliza Graham, youngest daughter of Reginald Graham, Esq., of Brighton.

As the spring and summer advanced, however, a severe trial overshadowed the gladness with which the year began. Wordsworth and his wife had gone up to town in April, and were staying with their nephew at Westminster, when they heard of the serious illness of their daughter. As stated in a previous chapter, she never recovered the effect of the chill she caught while preparing her brother's house at Carlisle for his bride. The parents hurried north, and spent more than two months of painful anxiety and grief. Dora Quillinan died on the 9th of July 1847. Next day the poet wrote thus to his nephew:—

“MY DEAR CHRISTOPHER,—Last night (I ought to have said a quarter before one this morning), it pleased God to take to Himself the spirit of our beloved daughter, and your truly affectionate cousin. . . .

I need not write more. Your aunt bears up under this affliction as becomes a Christian.—Your affectionate uncle, and the more so for this affliction,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

Pray for us.”

To Wordsworth this blow was a terrible one. He wrote to Moxon, August 9, “Our loss is immeasurable”; and on

December 29, "Our sorrow is for life, but God's will be done!"

His grief and dejection at the loss of his daughter were more passionate and overwhelming than Quillinan's. She had been the very light of his eyes, since the dark curtain had fallen which prevented his sister Dorothy from continuing to be the ministering angel she once was.

In realising the aged poet's grief, we cannot help recalling the lines in *The Triad* describing this daughter, written in 1828:—

What more changeful than the sea ?
 But over his great tides
 Fidelity presides ;
 And this light-hearted Maiden constant is as he.
 High is her aim as heaven above,
 And wide as ether her good-will ;
 And, like the lowly reed, her love
 Can drink its nurture from the scantiest rill :
 Insight as keen as frosty star
 Is to *her* charity no bar,
 Nor interrupts her frolic graces
 When she is, far from these wild places,
 Encircled by familiar faces.

O the charm that manners draw,
 Nature, from thy genuine law !

 She, in benign affections pure,
 In self-forgetfulness secure,
 Sheds round the transient harm or vague mischance
 A light unknown to tutored elegance."

The following is a letter from Miss Harriet Martineau to Mrs. Wordsworth on Dora Quillinan's death.

"Swiss Cottage, Cheshunt, July 17.

DEAR MRS. WORDSWORTH,—I see that your painful task is over, and that you have resigned your treasure ; resigned it, I am confident, not submissively but cheerfully. The first feeling, to those who heard suddenly, as I did, that such a call was made on you, was of deep pain ; but all subsequent thought of

you has been comforting ; thought of your years, which ensure that your separation cannot be long ; thought of what she was, which ensures your peace of mind in every act of retrospection ; and, above all, thought of her acquiescence, which must be a strong support to yours.

Do not for a moment, think of noticing this note ; I write for my own pleasure. I rejoice to hear that dear Miss Fenwick is with you, or soon to be so. If she is by your side, pray give my kind love to her. I beg my respectful and sympathising regards to Mr. Wordsworth, and am, dear Mrs. Wordsworth, yours affectionately,

H. MARTINEAU."

Basil Montagu wrote thus to the bereaved and disconsolate father :—

"Boulogne, August 1, 1847.

MY DEAR WORDSWORTH,—I feel most affectionately for the loss of your dear child, and should have written sooner, but from my habit of hesitating before I speak. Daily do I read your works with greatest respect. Heaven and earth may pass away, but these works do not pass away. I still ever think of our first meeting as one of the most fortunate events of my life. I have just received the first proof of what I, in my vanity, call my *magnum opus*, upon which I have been occupied daily, through fair weather and through foul, for more than thirty years,—*Thoughts on the Conduct of the Understanding*. I will venture to send you the first sheet, as soon as I receive it. I hope to be in the North in September. I am, thank God, in good health and spirits, and as industrious as usual. May the Almighty bless and preserve you !—Your ever faithful

BASIL MONTAGU."

As was natural, the few survivors of Wordsworth's oldest friends, the friends of his youthful prime, became more to him in his old age. Part of a letter from one of these,—Joseph Cottle, of Bristol, his first publisher, and ever steadfast friend,—may be quoted, because of its reference to those early Bristol times.

“*Firfield House, April 24, 1847.*”

MY DEAR SIR,— . . . Perhaps, when you next come into this vicinity I may hope for the happiness of seeing you, but, at our time of life, we are *birds of passage*, and may next meet in a better world; but, with the hope of the Christian, that prospect is rather animating than terrible. My object in now addressing you is to say, that the printing of my *Reminiscences of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey* will be completed in about a fortnight. Unsolicited on my part, a publisher applied to me to reprint my *Early Recollections*, and offered to take the whole impression.

.

You will be sorry to learn that my three trials, arising out of the *Early Recollections*, occasioned a loss of nearly a thousand pounds! Judge Maule was exceedingly and unusually hostile, but it has furnished me with an opportunity of forgiveness.

JOSEPH COTTLE.”

In February 1847, the Chancellorship of the University of Cambridge became vacant by the death of the Duke of Northumberland. The Prince Consort was elected his successor. According to universal custom an Ode had to be written, set to music, and performed on the Installation Day. The aged Poet Laureate was asked to write it. “His Royal Highness,” wrote Colonel Phipps to Wordsworth, “would have felt considerable hesitation in thus breaking in upon your retirement, were it not that he might thus bear testimony to his admiration for your genius, and might be the means of preserving for the University of Cambridge another valuable work of one of her most distinguished sons.”

Wordsworth replied:—

“*Bath, 15th March, 1847.*”

SIR,—The request with which through your hands his Royal Highness the Prince Albert has honoured me, could not

but be highly gratifying ; and I hope that I may be able upon this interesting occasion to retouch a harp which I will not say, with Tasso, oppressed by misfortunes and years, has been hung up upon a cypress, but which has, however, for some time been laid aside.—I have the honour to be, with sincere respect, faithfully, your most obedient servant,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

The Hon. C. B. Phipps."

The Ode was set to music by Mr. Thomas Attwood Walmesley, and "proved most effective in performance." * "The Installation Ode," said Madame Bunsen, "was really affecting, because the striking point selected was founded in fact, all exaggeration and *humbug* being avoided." †

It was published in the newspapers on the day after the installation ceremony as "written for the occasion by the Poet Laureate, by royal command"; but it was partly written by his nephew and biographer, Christopher. How much was Wordsworth's and how much his nephew's cannot now be known : certain it is that the authorship was divided. Wordsworth was too much overwhelmed by the shadow of his coming loss to write the whole of it, or indeed to give free utterance to his spirit in what he did write. On his return to Westminster his nephew describes the whole ceremonial at Cambridge thus :—

"*Cloisters, Westminster, July 8, 1847.*

MY DEAR UNCLE,—I was in the Senate House on Tuesday during the performance of the Installation Ode ; and, being on the platform very near Her Majesty, and the Chancellor, and among all the grandees, I had the best opportunity of hearing and seeing the effect it produced, and I assure you

* See *The Life of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort*, by Theodore Martin, vol. i. p. 395.

† See *Bunsen's Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 137.

that nothing could be more gratifying than the manner in which it was received. All seemed to admire the patriotic and moral spirit of the Ode, and I think it did good to many hearts, as well as gave pleasure to many ears. It was even performed in London in the Hanover Square Rooms. It is, I hope, some comfort to you, dear uncle, in your own private sorrow, that you have been affording pleasure to others, and have dignified and sanctified the joy of a great Academic Festival. Nothing could be more magnificent than the Tuesday dinner in Trinity Hall: where were the Queen and the Prince, and the noblest and most distinguished persons of the land; and many very eminent Foreigners. The Master did his part well. After dinner the Queen and Prince had reception at Trinity Lodge, in the great Drawing Room. I was presented to them, and was received very graciously for your sake, I suppose, and for my father's. May God bless you all, my dear uncle and aunt, and dear Dora!—Your affectionate Nephew,

CHS. WORDSWORTH."

The following letter from Julius Charles Hare refers to the same incident:—

"Hurstmonceaux, Hurst Green, July 6, 1847.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—You must allow me to write and thank you for the noble Installation Ode which I have just read, and which has stirred me more than any poem I have read for a long time. I have been wondering, since I heard you were to write an Ode for the occasion, how you would extricate yourself from what I feared you would deem a difficult and irksome task, and have been trying to imagine the train of thought you were likely to pursue; but I had not at all divined the grand succession of great national pictures and moral ideas you were about to combine with such felicity around the solemnity of the day. The musical variations too seem to me singularly beautiful. I hope it has been tolerably well set: it should

have been by Mendelssohn. They are probably performing it at this very moment in the Senate House, where the effect must be quite overpowering. I know not how the Queen will be able to bear it. Had I seen the Ode before, I should hardly have been able to resist the desire of hearing it with all the circumstances which it will glorify and hallow. As it was, I staid at home, thinking that, when one has doubled the cape of half a century, one has no longer any business to go seeking after festivities.

You, my dear Friend, are kept at home by a stronger and sadder cause. It has been a deep sorrow to me to hear of the calamity with which you are threatened: and assuredly thousands of hearts, which have learnt to love and reverence you as one of their chief benefactors, their moral teacher, and guide to the region of eternal principles and lofty resolves, are sympathising with your affliction. May you be enabled to find a blessing in it, by the 'faith that looks through death'! and may that same faith support and calm that other heart for whom all the future 'with sober certainties of love is blest.' I trust that even at such a time you will not think this letter an intrusion. It only expresses what is felt by many who have never seen you in the body. My having had that additional happiness emboldens me to give utterance to the feeling which they share in silence.—Ever most sincerely and gratefully yours,

J. C. HARE."

Adam Sedgwick, the professor of geology at Cambridge, who was a joint labourer with Wordsworth in his memorial volume on the Lake District, also wrote to him from Norwich, August 10, 1847, both on the Installation ceremony, and on his daughter's loss.

"MY DEAR SIR,—During the festivities of our Installation, one thing only seemed to be wanting,—the presence of the venerable poet who had poured out the stores of his mind to do

honour to our Queen's visit, and to grace the triumph of her husband. You would indeed have had a heartfelt greeting; and the performance of your Ode was followed by one of the most rapturous manifestations of feeling I have ever had the happiness of witnessing. Nay, I do not express myself with sufficient strength. It was most rapturous, and far beyond any outpouring of the heart I had ever witnessed. Those who knew you well, and would have had the pleasure of your personal society, were grieved to hear that you were kept away by the illness of your daughter; and since then we have learnt that it has pleased God to take her from you. . . . Religious consolation is the true balm of a troubled spirit—and may God pour out this comfort in its fulness into both your hearts! I trust that your life may still be spared for several years; and that, after this bereavement, you may still be permitted to enjoy the calm pleasures of a religious and honoured old age.—
. . . Your sincere and affectionate old friend,

ADAM SEDGWICK."

Wordsworth never got over the loss of his bright-hearted, tender-souled daughter. It cast a shadow over his remaining years, cheered as they were by the presence and devotion of one, who mourned her daughter's loss as keenly, though with more quietness and self-restraint.

Mrs. Arnold, writing to Lady Richardson August 14, 1847, said: "I have nothing happy to tell you about Rydal Mount. Even Miss Fenwick does not seem to rouse *him* from the state of almost hopeless grief and depression into which he seems plunged. He appears well in health, but as if he could not rouse from the unhappiness of having it made real to him that his cherished Dora was gone."

Writing to Mr. Moxon on the 9th August, Wordsworth said: "We bear up under our affliction as well as God enables us to do, but oh, my dear friend, our loss is immeasurable!"

And again later on—

“We see little of poor Mr. Quillinan. Mrs. Wordsworth seldom goes down the hill, and I have not courage to go to his house.”

Crabb Robinson records many interesting particulars of a visit to Rydal about this time. Talking to the Rydal Mount servant, James Dixon, about the poet's excessive grief, the servant said, “It's very sad, sir. He was moaning about her, and said, ‘Oh, but she was such a bright creature,’ and I said, ‘But don't you think, sir, she's brighter now than she ever was?’ And then master burst into a flood of tears.”

An extract from a letter of Mrs. Fletcher's to her daughter, Lady Richardson, gives a glimpse of the Rydal household in the late autumn of this year :—

“November 24th, 1847.*

We went this evening to drink tea at Rydal Mount, and found the dear old couple *tête-à-tête*. Mrs. Arnold went with us. Mr. Wordsworth was more like his former self than I have seen him since Dora's death. He showed us two letters he had had this week from ladies he had never seen or heard of, one in prose, the other in verse. The former said she was the wife of a hard-worked London solicitor, with five children. She found her greatest solace for all her cares and troubles in his *Excursion*. She compared herself to a wearied traveller seated by a dusty roadside, tired and thirsty, when lo! a fountain of fresh water sprang up by her side; she drank of it freely, was refreshed and strengthened to pursue her journey. This was the effect *The Excursion* produced on her mind and feelings. The other letter was from a solitary single woman, who describes herself as one who has survived all her kindred and the friends of her youth, and, seated on a sandy beach at

* *Autobiography of Mrs. Fletcher*, pp. 265-6.

Southport, she can forget all her sorrows when she has a volume of Wordsworth in her hand. Some of the lines are very good, and reminded us of Crabbe. Mrs. Arnold told him a gentleman at Oxford had made Susy read to him Wordsworth's poem of *Lycoris*, and we begged him to read it to us. He said it was suggested to him one day at Ullswater, in the year 1817, by seeing two white sunny clouds reflected in the lake. 'They looked,' he said, 'like two swans.' He read the poem twice over, in his most beautiful and impressive manner. It describes a feeling quite familiar to me—the preference the young have for autumn and the old for spring."

The reminiscence of a visit to the Mount two autumns later (Sept. 30, 1849), by Mr. Roby, author of *Traditions of Lancashire*, may follow this:—

"We have seen Wordsworth to-day. . . . His voice, somewhat indistinct, gave indications of old age; not so his ideas or expressions. The lower part of his face is deeply furrowed; but when sitting with his back to the light, animated in conversation, everything is lost in its glowing expression, except his noble expanse of forehead. He chatted away on literary matters evidently with hearty pleasure. They talked of a distinguished living writer;* of his style Mr. W. remarked that every sentence seemed finished by itself, which was never the case of our best writers;—that reviewing had an injurious effect on the style of a literary man,—the reviewer has ever to be saying something that will tell, every sentence must be striking.

Allusion was made to a near neighbour; † W. observed that she was clever, but apt to be imposed on; . . . 'but,' he added, 'I like her benevolence, and forgive many things for that.' Speaking of a writer whom he considered not a safe

* Lord Macaulay.

† Miss Martineau.

guide on account of his prejudices, he said, 'He is so prejudiced that he does not know when he lies.'

Altogether the visit was one of great delight. There was so much more enthusiasm about him than from the philosophic cast of his poems I had expected. The genial glow of his manner, the warmth of his shake of hands at parting, and especially the quick pleasure with which he turned round to his wife whenever she made a remark, and the affectionate tone in which, when he did not catch it, he would inquire, 'What did you say, Mary?' quite won my heart." *

Another reminiscence of this time is found in the Journal of Caroline Fox, December 29th, 1849 : ". . . The gentle softened evening light of his spirit is very lovely, and there is a quiet sublimity about him, as he waits on the shores of that Eternal World, which seems already to cast over him some sense of its beauty and its peace." †

Crabb Robinson again came down to the Lake District at Christmas 1848 ; but he records only a few incidents of his visit. He found Wordsworth more cheerful than in 1847 ; and stayed with Mrs. Wordsworth, while the poet, Derwent Coleridge, Quillinan, and Mr. Fletcher went to Hartley Coleridge's funeral at Grasmere.

On the day that Hartley died, Derwent Coleridge called on Wordsworth, to tell him that all was over ; and he records, in his memoir of his brother, that the aged poet's "words were few, and concluded by this touching request, or I should rather say, direction . 'Let him lie by us—he would have wished it.' The day following he walked over with me to Grasmere—to the churchyard, a plain enclosure of the olden time, . . . in which lay the remains of his wife's sister, his nephew, and his

* See *Sketch of Life of John Roby*, p. 60.

† *Journals of Caroline Fox*, vol. ii. p. 152.

beloved daughter. Here, having desired the sexton to measure out the ground for his own and Mrs. Wordsworth's grave, he bade him measure out the space of a third grave for my brother, immediately beyond. 'When I lifted up my eyes from my daughter's grave,' he exclaimed, 'he was standing there!' pointing to the spot where my brother had stood on the sorrowful occasion to which he alluded. Then turning to the sexton, he said, 'Keep the ground for us,—we are old people, and it cannot be for long.'”*

In the summer of 1849 Wordsworth was able to visit his relations, the Hutchinsons, at West Malvern. Mr. Hutchinson had left Brinsop Court in Herefordshire, and was living at Malvern; and a last gathering of friends took place at this retreat. Crabb Robinson came down from London, and crossed the hills between the two Beacons to the Westminster Arms Hotel at the West. He records in his Diary, under date June 21, 1849:—

“We had not been there long, before we saw, on the road before the house, Miss Fenwick, driven by the Rydal ‘James’; and Mr. Wordsworth accompanying her. A hearty greeting. We accompanied Miss Fenwick to her house, and I walked thence to the parsonage, where was Mrs. Wordsworth, and the Hutchinson family, father and mother, two daughters, and the incumbent of the perpetual curacy.

June 22d.—Went to the Camp, with W. W., and Mr. George Hutchinson, and party.” He mentions that the poet visited the Old Abbey Church; and says that the one time, when Wordsworth talked freely and in his old style, during this visit, was with Mr. Taylor [doubtless Henry Taylor]. He adds that he consulted Wordsworth about his Memoir; and he records, rather enigmatically, that he spoke with him as “to the expediency of mentioning a delicate subject” [he doubtless refers to

* See Memoir of Hartley Coleridge, prefixed to his *Poems* (1851), p. cciii.

the misunderstanding with Coleridge], and has "the satisfaction of believing that I have contributed to a determination in which all parties will be agreed."

It is a mistake to dwell minutely on the closing days and hours in the life of a great man. In Wordsworth's case, some extracts from the record of his nephew will suffice :—

"On Sunday, the 10th of March 1850, Mr. Wordsworth attended divine service at Rydal Chapel for the last time. Between four and five o'clock in the afternoon of that day he set out to walk to Grasmere, accompanied by Mr. Quillinan and Miss Hutchinson. The weather was ungenial, with a keen wind from the north-east; and Mr. Wordsworth was lightly clad, as usual. He walked over White Moss, and paid a visit to Mrs. Fisher, who had been in his service when he lived at Town-End. Being there asked how Mrs. Wordsworth was, he replied, 'Pretty well: but, indeed, she must be very unwell for any one to discover it: she never complains.' . . . His friends thought him looking feeble: he had a stick in his hand, on which he leaned when sitting in the house.

The next day Mr. Wordsworth, accompanied by his wife and his two nieces, called at Mr. Quillinan's house; he then walked on to Foxhow, to see Mrs. Arnold, and thence to Ambleside, and returned home to Rydal.

On the afternoon of the following day he went towards Grasmere. He called at the cottage near the White Moss quarry, and, the occupant not being within, he sat down on the stone seat of the porch to watch the setting sun. It was a cold bright evening. . . .

On the 14th he complained of pain in his side. On the 20th the symptoms of the disorder assumed a more serious aspect. The throat and chest were affected, and the pleura were inflamed. . . . He seemed to feel much repugnance both to medicine and food. From this time his bodily condition fluctuated from day to day for more than a fortnight.

Sunday, 7th April.—Mr. Wordsworth completed his eightieth year to-day : he was prayed for in Rydal Chapel, morning and afternoon.

Saturday, 20th.— . . . Mr. John Wordsworth had just been administering the Holy Communion to his father, who, when asked whether he would receive it, replied, ‘That is just what I want.’ . . .

Shortly before his death, it was thought he might be more comfortable if he was shaved ; and when his old servant, James Dixon, came to attend him, he said, in his serious calm way, ‘James, let me die easy.’

Tuesday, April 23d. . . . The entry in Mr. Quillinan’s journal for this day is as follows : ‘Mr. Wordsworth breathed his last calmly, passing away almost insensibly, exactly at twelve o’clock, while the cuckoo clock was striking the hour.’

Wordsworth died on the twenty-third of April, a day already famous as the birthday and the deathday of Shakespeare, and as the deathday of Cervantes.*

His son John wrote thus, on the day of his father’s death, to the poet Rogers :—

“ Rydal Mount, Tuesday.

MY DEAR SIR,—As my father’s oldest son, I write to you, as perhaps his oldest living friend, to inform you that he expired this day at a quarter to twelve o’clock.

My best prayer for you is that your latter end may be like his ; it was tranquil, and without much previous suffering. He was himself to the last. I have had running in my head with regard to it, and him, what Lucan puts into the mouth of Brutus respecting Cato—

Minimas rerum discordia turbat :
Pacem summa tenent.

—Believe me, dear Mr. Rogers, with much regard and esteem,
yours very faithfully,

J. WORDSWORTH.”

* Cervantes and Shakespeare died on the same day of the same year.

Mr. Ellis Yarnall, of Philadelphia, whose reminiscences of Wordsworth, in 1850, have been already given, writes thus of the day of Wordsworth's death :— *

“ As we came down the mountain, Miss Arnold spoke of her recollection of the day of Wordsworth's death. She and one of her young friends were almost alone at Fox How. All day they knew that the end was at hand, and their minds were filled with the thought of it. Late in the afternoon they climbed one of the hills looking down on Rydal Mount, their hearts bowed with a solemnity of feeling,—burning, one might almost say, within them,—as they thought of the moment that approached. Suddenly, as they looked, they saw that the windows of the house were being closed, and they knew thus of the faring forth of the great soul. It was almost as if they themselves had witnessed his departure. I could well understand how the solemn Nature around would have a grave and awful look to them as they pondered in their young hearts that ending and that beginning. I spoke of Wordsworth's own lines on hearing that ‘ the dissolution of Mr. Fox was hourly expected ’ :—

A power is passing from the earth
To breathless Nature's dark abyss ;
But when the great and good depart
What is it more than this—

That Man, who is from God sent forth,
Doth yet again to God return ?—
Such ebb and flow must ever be,
Then wherefore should we mourn ?

Mr. William Johnston, who wrote a brief memoir of the poet's son-in-law, Quillinan, prefixed to the edition of his poems published in 1853, tells us :—

* See the second of the articles entitled, “ Walks and Visits in Wordsworth's Country ” in *Lippincott's Magazine*, December 1876.

“ I was at Ambleside, and Mr. Quillinan’s guest at Loughrigg Holm, for a few days in the autumn of 1849, and I could not but observe the respectful tenderness that appeared to subsist between them. The last evening I was in that neighbourhood, we remained with Mr. Wordsworth at Rydal Mount till ten o’clock, and when we rose to go, he proposed to accompany us a part of the way. I begged him not to expose himself to the night-air, but he seemed to scorn the suggestion that any such care was necessary, and he walked with us. At the bridge which crosses the Rotha, he parted from us, and startled me by the solemnity of his farewell. ‘ I am an old man,’ he said, ‘ nearly fourscore, and perhaps may not live to see you again—farewell! God bless you.’ His figure soon disappeared in the darkness, and I saw him no more. I thought him looking well for his years, and not differing very much from what I had known him three-and-twenty years before, except that he was now apt to sit silent, which had not been his wont in former years. Mr. Quillinan knew more of the sadness of his heart, but he also had hopes that the ‘ old man eloquent ’ had still some years of life before him. . . .

Mr. Quillinan’s letter to Mrs. Henry Nelson Coleridge, announcing his death, is as follows :—

‘ We had known for two or three days at least that there was no hope ; but we were led to believe the end was not yet. At twelve o’clock this day, however, he passed away, very very quietly. Mrs. Wordsworth is quite resigned. There is always some sweetening of the bitter cup ; it was expected that he would linger perhaps for some weeks, and that his sufferings would be extreme ; but the mercy of God has shortened the agony, and we fondly hope that he did not suffer much pain—that he had not reached that stage of suffering which the medical men apprehended. Last night I was with him for about half an hour, up to ten

o'clock; he lay quite still and never spoke, except to call for water, which he often did. 'Drink, drink,' was all he said. William (his younger son) sat up with him till past five o'clock, and was then relieved by John (his elder son), who had only returned from Brigham (his parish) at nine last evening. He remained to the last in the same quiet state, never moving; yet since this had been the case so long, and he had always been most unwilling to move, or to have his position altered, it was by no means supposed that the last hour was so near. He is gone! You know well the distress at Rydal Mount. . . . It is said that Shakespeare died on his birthday, April 23d. This great man, Wordsworth, was no Shakespeare, and the dramatic power, perhaps, was not in him; but he had a grand and tender genius of his own that will live in the heart of his country, and these mountains will be his noblest monument. His life was a long and prosperous life, and he was rewarded, in the latter part of it at least, for the virtuous use he had made of the great power intrusted to him, with 'honour, love, obedience, and troops of friends, and all that should accompany old age.' " *

The following letter from Mrs. Davy, of Ambleside, to Mrs. Graves, the wife of the incumbent at Windermere, tells of Wordsworth's death, and of some of its attendant circumstances:—

“*Lesketh How*, April 24, [1850].

MY DEAR MRS. GRAVES,— . . . The tidings, I trust, did not come too painfully to your dear husband, though to him, as to us all, the loss—the neighbourly, kindly, affectionate loss—will be long felt, more than can be supposed by the admirers of the poet who were not admitted to his intercourse. When Dr. Davy returned from his early visit to the Mount yesterday, before eleven o'clock, he told me that Mr. Words-

* See the Memoir of Edward Quillinan prefixed to his *Poems*, pp. xxxix-xlii.

worth had certainly not many hours to live, but might survive the night. His release was granted much sooner. My mother and I took our drive to Grasmere at one o'clock, and there, at his good old friend's, Mrs. Cookson's, we met the tidings that he had died at twelve. 'Just,' Mrs. Cookson said, 'when the cuckoo clock was singing noon.' For the last week or two there was so much pain, along with the weariness and feebleness, that it was indeed in great mercy the life was not drawn out. His speech was scarcely articulate when Dr. Davy saw him yesterday morning, but he was quite conscious of what was passing, and shrank sensitively from a cold touch applied to his pulse. Soon after, when all the household were about his bed, he made his kind nursing son John understand that he wished to have the 'commendatory prayer for the departing' read to him, and he gave tokens of following it mentally. His last breath was drawn most gently; no painful struggle for dear Mrs. Wordsworth to look upon. When all was over, she went to his poor sister's room, and said to her, 'Well, dear, he has gone to Dora,' and the tidings were quietly received. Indeed, Miss Wordsworth's quietness during the whole illness, along with her anxiety and sorrow, has been blessed, as well as touching. Mrs. Hutchinson and her daughters are at the Mount; and Mrs. H. tells me that dear Mrs. Wordsworth is, with her own gentle quietness, going about her customary occupations to-day. The funeral is to take place on Saturday. . . . —Most truly yours,
M. DAVY."

Mrs. Davy's mother, Mrs. Fletcher, wrote to her other daughter, Lady Richardson, April 26, 1850:—*

"Dr. and Mrs. Davy were both much struck by the likeness of the countenance, in the deep repose of death, to that

* *Autobiography of Mrs. Fletcher*, pp. 283-4.

of Dante. The expression was much more feminine than it had been in life—very like his sister. She bears this sad loss with unexpected calmness. She is drawn about as usual in her chair. She was heard to say, as she passed the door where the body lay, ‘O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?’ . . . It has been a great privilege to have seen this great and good man so nearly. I think it may be said of him ‘that he did justly, loved mercy, and walked humbly with his God.’ The funeral is to be very private—only Dr. Davy invited from this house.”

On the 25th April 1850, Miss Fenwick wrote to Henry Taylor: “This post has brought me the tidings of the death of Mr. Wordsworth . . . with as little suffering as can attend this last circumstance of our being, and he seemed sensible to the last. . . . Mrs. Wordsworth bears up as we would expect of her. She will take to the thoughts that have comfort in them, as well she may; for she has done all things well through life. I take to comforting thoughts too, about him and her. He did the work he had to do in this world nobly. His last years were given for the good of his own soul. I am anxious to be with my beloved Mrs. Wordsworth.” *

Sir Henry replied: “We had heard of the event, and you were much in our thoughts. No man could die less than he, so much of his mind remaining upon earth; and the happiness that remained to him in life had run low; so that he seemed to have lived as long as we could desire that he should live, so far as regards any ends and purposes that are within our cognisance. But it is a great and sad event, and that one cannot but feel. He was the greatest of the two great men that remained to us, and I believe the old Duke is the same age.” *

* *Autobiography of Henry Taylor*, ii. 55.

Wordsworth was buried in Grasmere Churchyard on Saturday, the 27th April, beside his daughter, and his children who died in infancy, under the shade of one of the yew-trees planted by himself.

Mrs. Fletcher wrote to Lady Richardson, 1st May 1850:—*

“The same simultaneous feeling filled the old church of Grasmere with unbidden but most sure mourners. When Mrs. Wordsworth, supported by her two sons, followed the coffin into the church, I should not have recognised her figure, it was so bowed down with grief; but she bore it calmly, and I stood opposite to her when she bent over the grave. When she was seated in the carriage on leaving the churchyard, Mr. Quillinan told us they feared she would have fainted. She did not, however, and after she returned home she resumed such firmness and composure that she joined them at tea, and made it for them.”

There are few burial-places in the world more peaceful than the churchyard of Grasmere. It was a fitter resting-place for Wordsworth—a quiet spot amongst the graves of the ‘statesmen,’ in a region imperishably associated with himself—than a corner in Westminster Abbey would have been. A lady, who visited the place in 1877, wrote thus:—

“To lie under the mound, on which the shadow of that grey tower falls, seems scarcely like a banishment from life, only a deeper sleep, in a home quieter but not less lovely than those which surround the margin of the lake. Voices of children come up from the village street, with the hum of rustic life. From sunny heights the lowing of cattle is heard, and the bleat of the sheep that pasture on the hillsides. And by day and night unceasingly, the Rotha, hurrying past the churchyard wall, mingles the babble of its waters with the

* *Autobiography of Mrs. Fletcher*, pp. 284-5.

soft *susurrus* of the breeze, that plays among the sheltering sycamores and yews."

Shortly after Wordsworth's death, his friend Sir W. Rowan Hamilton wrote thus to Mr. Graves :—

" *Observatory, May 10, 1850.**

. . . I feel, indeed, that Wordsworth is much nearer to me, since his withdrawal from terrestrial locality, than he was even when I could pay to him, from time to time, those actual and personal visits which are among my brightest and fondest recollections."

Mrs. Inge, of Worcester College, Oxford, wrote to a friend, in 1874 :—

" In 1851 we were all staying at Rydal, and saw a good deal of Mrs. Wordsworth, and two or three times we were allowed to see the dear sister. She was, of course, a wreck of what she had been, but our impressions of her were not so sad as I think others have described. She was in her garden chair, and there was a marvellous gleam and radiance in her face, as she repeated some of her brother's lines. My mother had known her other brother, the Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, very intimately, and spoke of him. ' Ah,' she said, ' my brothers were good ! good ! The boys in our family were all good. *I* was always a termagant, you know !' ' We have learnt something rather different about you,' said my mother—

' The blessing of my later years
Was with me when a boy . . . '

' Ah !' she cried, with a sort of flash that made one see what the ' wild eyes ' had been—' Ah ! but that's what my dear brother said of me ! you must not believe it, you know.' Then

* *Life of Sir W. Rowan Hamilton*, vol. ii. p. 651.

she seemed to lose the thread of thought, or rather of memory; and she repeated some stanzas of Gray's *Elegy*, putting the most *intense* expression into them. I fancy her manner of giving utterance to verse must have been like her brother's, but I only know his from description. The voice was like the old Master's, and the ardent, almost vehement expressiveness was like his a little overdone. Another time she repeated some very touching lines of her own, made since her illness. I am not sure whether they have ever been printed, but I can never forget the ring of triumphant joyousness in her voice and the gleam that lit up her countenance as she repeated—

No prisoner am I to this couch !
My heart is free to roam. . . .”

The following is Mr. Ellis Yarnall's record of a last visit to Mrs. Wordsworth, and to Rydal Mount, in 1857.*

“*Aug. 8.*—I entered by the small gateway the fair terraced garden so rich in bloom and fragrance. I saw once more the old greeting, *Salve !* as I stood on the threshold. James, the old servant, welcomed me, and conducted me to the drawing-room. I found Mrs. Wordsworth seated in her old place by the fireside. Her greeting was simple and cordial, but only by my voice could she know me, for I saw at once she was quite blind. . . . She was cheerful and bright, and talked of the events of the day in the sweet quiet manner peculiar to her, and with clear intelligence, and yet she was within a few days of being eighty-seven. . . . But there seemed a benediction in the very presence of Mrs. Wordsworth, so much did her countenance express peace and purity, so gentle and so sweetly gracious was her bearing. . . .

Aug. 16.—My last Sunday in England. . . . Mrs. Wordsworth to-day enters her eighty-eighth year. I sat by her side as I did two years ago, in the same pew, the Sunday before I

* See “Walks and Visits in Wordsworth's Country,” in *Lippincott's Magazine*, December 1876, pp. 674-6.

sailed. Her meek countenance, her reverent love, I saw once more—the face of one to whom the angels seemed already ministering. Service being over, I shook hands with her, and received a kind invitation to dine at Rydal Mount. . . . At dinner Mr. Robinson was the talker, as he always is. He told us of his intercourse with Goethe, whom he seems to have seen a good deal of. He said he never mentioned Wordsworth's name to Goethe, fearing that he would either say he had never read his poetry or that he did not like it. He said Southey was a collector of other men's thoughts : Wordsworth gave forth his own. Wordsworth was like the spider, spinning his thread from his own substance ; Southey the bee, gathering wherever he could. Mrs. Wordsworth did not join us at table till the dessert came in. Then, her one glass of port having been poured out for her, she took it in her hand and, turning her face towards me, said, 'I wish you your health, Mr. Yarnall, and a prosperous voyage, and a safe return to your friends !'

The interval after dinner was short. I received, if I may so say, Mrs. Wordsworth's final blessing, and went my way, thankful it had been given me to draw near to one so pure, to a nature so nobly simple. Not only her children, but all who have come in contact with her, will rise up to call her blessed. Surely, thrice blessed was the poet with such a wife; and indeed he himself with wonderful fulness has declared she was almost as the presence of God to him."

There is little to record of Mrs. Wordsworth in the closing years of her life. Her calmness and practical sagacity never forsook her. Serene and brave, and patient even when deaf and blind, she lived on till she nearly reached her ninetieth year. One of her last remarks was that the worst of living in the Lake country was that it made one so unwilling to leave it.

Her son, John Wordsworth, wrote to Crabb Robinson from Rydal Mount, January 15, 1859 :—

“DEAR ROBINSON,— . . . My dearest mother is gradually sinking. . . . I never saw so happy a deathbed. I do not say spiritually (and you know the just grounds for that), but physically. She suffers no pain, and follows up every little service with the remark—‘I am so happy, and thankful.’— . . .

J. WORDSWORTH.”

She died on the 17th January 1859, and was buried beside her husband in Grasmere Churchyard. The simple headstone of blue Cumbrian slate has nothing on it but the words—

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

1850.

MARY WORDSWORTH.

1859.

CHAPTER XLVII.

CONTEMPORARY JUDGMENTS.

As already explained, it is no necessary part of the biographer's work critically to appraise the writings of the man whose life he writes: and estimates of Wordsworth's work were made by some of his contemporaries in his lifetime that are probably of greater value to posterity than any that are likely to succeed them. It was at one time projected as a part of the work of "The Wordsworth Society" to collect a record of opinion in reference to the poet, from the date of the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 to the present day. This may yet be done. Meanwhile, it may be a fit conclusion to these volumes if the judgments of three of Wordsworth's most notable contemporaries are brought together,—those of Thomas Carlyle, of John Stuart Mill, and of Henry Taylor.

At Mentone, in March 1867, Carlyle wrote down his Reminiscences both of Southey and of Wordsworth. Of Wordsworth he wrote:—

" . . . A man recognisably of strong intellectual powers, strong character; given to meditation, and much contemptuous of the *unmeditative* world and its noisy nothingnesses. . . .

On a summer morning (let us call it 1840), I was apprised by Taylor that Wordsworth had come to Town; and would meet a small party of us at a certain Tavern in St. James's

Street, at breakfast,—to which I was invited for the given day and hour. We had a pretty little room; quiet, though looking street-ward (Tavern's *name* is quite lost to me); the morning sun was pleasantly tinting the opposite houses, a balmy, calm and bright morning. Wordsworth, I think, arrived just along with me; we had still five minutes of sauntering and miscellaneous talking before the whole were assembled. . . . Wordsworth seemed in good tone, and, much to Taylor's satisfaction, talked a great deal, about 'poetic' correspondents of his own. . . . Then finally about *Literature*, literary laws, practices, observances,—at considerable length, and turning wholly on the mechanical part, including even a good deal of shallow enough *etymology*, from me and others, which was well received: on all this Wordsworth enlarged with evident satisfaction, and was joyfully reverent of the 'wells of English undefiled,'—though stone *dumb* as to the deeper rules, and wells of Eternal Truth and Harmony you were to try and set forth by said undefiled wells of *English* or what other Speech you had! To me a little disappointing, but not much;—though it would have given me pleasure had the robust veteran man emerged a little out of vocables into things, now and then, as he never once chanced to do. For the rest, he talked well in his way; with veracity, easy brevity and force; as a wise tradesman would of his tools and workshop—and as no unwise one could. His voice was good, frank, and sonorous, though practically clear, distinct, and forcible, rather than melodious; the tone of him business-like, sedately confident, no discourtesy, yet no anxiety about being courteous; a fine wholesome rusticity, fresh as his mountain breezes, sat well on the stalwart veteran, and on all he said and did. You would have said he was a usually taciturn man; glad to unlock himself, to audience sympathetic and intelligent, when such offered itself. His face bore marks of much, not always peaceful, meditation; the look of it not bland or benevolent,

so much as close, impregnable and hard : a man *multa tacere loquive paratus*, in a world where he had experienced no lack of contradictions as he strode along ! The eyes were not very brilliant, but they had a quiet clearness. . . . He was large-boned, lean, but still firm-knit, tall and strong-looking when he stood : a right good old steel-gray figure, with a fine rustic simplicity and dignity about him, and a veracious *strength* looking through him which might have suited one of those old steel-gray Markgrafs whom Henry the Fowler set up to ward the 'marches,' and do battle with the intrusive Heathen, in a stalwart and judicious manner.

On this and other occasional visits of his, I saw Wordsworth a number of times, at dinners, in evening parties ; and we grew a little more familiar, but without much increase of real intimacy or affection springing up between us. He was willing to talk with me in a corner, in noisy extensive circles, having weak eyes, and little loving the general babble current in such places. . . .

Another and better corner dialogue I afterwards had with him, possibly also about this time ; which raised him intellectually some real degrees higher in my estimation than any of his deliverances written or oral had ever done ; and which I may reckon as the best of all his discoursings or dialogues with me. He had withdrawn to a corner, out of the light and of the general babble, as usual with him. I joined him there, and knowing how little fruitful was the Literary topic between us, set him on giving me an account of the notable practicalities he had seen in life, especially of the notable men. He went into all this with a certain alacrity. . . . He had been in France in the earlier or secondary stage of the Revolution ; had witnessed the struggle of *Girondins* and *Mountain*, in particular the execution of Gorsas, 'the first *Deputy* sent to the Scaffold' ; and testified strongly to the ominous feeling which that event produced in everybody, and of which he himself still seemed

to retain something. 'Where will it *end*, when you have set an example in *this* kind?' I knew well about Gorsas; but had found, in my readings, no trace of the public emotion his death excited; and perceived now that Wordsworth might be taken as a true supplement to my Book on this small point. He did not otherwise add to or alter my ideas on the Revolution: nor did we dwell long there; but hastened over to England and to the noteworthy, or at least noted, men of that and the subsequent time. 'Noted' and named, I ought perhaps to say, rather than 'noteworthy'; for in general I forget what men they were; and now remember only the excellent sagacity, distinctness, and credibility of Wordsworth's little Biographic Portraits of them. Never, or never but once, had I seen a stronger intellect, a more luminous and veracious power of insight, directed upon such a survey of fellow-men and their contemporary journey through the world. A great deal of Wordsworth lay in the mode and tone of drawing; but you perceived it to be faithful, accurate, and altogether lifelike, though Wordsworthian. One of the best remembered sketches (almost the only one now remembered at all) was that of Wilberforce. . . . I remember only the rustic Picture, sketched as with a burnt stick on the board of a pair of bellows, seemed to me completely good; and that the general effect was, one *saw* the great Wilberforce and his existence visible in all their main lineaments—but only as through the *reversed* telescope, and reduced to the size of a mouse and its nest, or little more! This was, in most or in all cases, the result brought out; one's-self and telescope of natural (or perhaps preternatural) size; but the object, so great to vulgar eyes, *reduced* amazingly, with all its lineaments recognisable. I found a very superior talent in these Wordsworth delineations. . . .

During the last seven or ten years of his life, Wordsworth felt himself to be a recognised lion, in certain considerable

London Circles. . . . [He] took his bit of lionism very quietly, with a smile sardonic rather than triumphant; and certainly got no harm by it, if he got or expected little good. . . . 'If you think me dull, be it just so!' this seemed to a most respectable extent to be his inspiring humour. . . . The light was always afflictive to his eyes; he carried in his pocket something like a skeleton brass candlestick, in which, setting it on the dinner-table, between him and the most afflictive or nearest of the chief lights, he touched a little spring, and there flitted out, at the top of his brass implement, a small vertical green circle, which prettily enough threw his eyes into shade, and screened him from that sorrow. . . . The tone of his voice, when I did get him afloat on some Cumberland or other matter germane to him, had a braced rustic vivacity, willingness, and solid precision, which alone rings in my ear when all else is gone. . . . In one of these Wordsworthian lion-dinners, . . . I sat a long way from Wordsworth; dessert, I think, had come in; and certainly there reigned in all quarters a cackle as of Babel (only politer, perhaps),—which far up in Wordsworth's quarter (who was leftward on my side of the table), seemed to have taken a sententious, rather louder, logical and quasi-scientific turn,—heartily unimportant to gods and men, so far as I could judge of it and of the other babble reigning. I looked upwards, leftwards, the coast being luckily for a moment clear: there, far off, beautifully screened in the shadow of his vertical green circle, which was on the farther side of him, sat Wordsworth, silent, in rock-like indifference, slowly but steadily gnawing some portion of what I judged to be raisins, with his eye and attention placidly fixed on these and these alone. The sight of whom, and of his rock-like indifference to the babble, quasi-scientific and other, with attention turned on the small practical alone, was comfortable and amusing to me, who felt like him, but could not eat raisins. This little glimpse I could still

paint, so clear and bright is it, and this shall be symbolical of all." *

The following occurs in the *Autobiography* of John Stuart Mill:—†

"This state of my thoughts and feelings made the fact of my reading Wordsworth for the first time (in the autumn of 1828), an important event in my life. I took up the collection of his poems from curiosity, with no expectation of mental relief from it, though I had before resorted to poetry with that hope. In the worst period of my depression, I had read through the whole of Byron (then new to me), to try whether a poet, whose peculiar department was supposed to be that of the intenser feelings, could rouse any feeling in me. As might be expected, I got no good from this reading, but the reverse. The poet's state of mind was too like my own. His was the lament of a man who had worn out all pleasures, and who seemed to think that life, to all who possess the good things of it, must necessarily be the vapid, uninteresting thing which I found it. His Harold and Manfred had the same burden on them which I had; and I was not in a frame of mind to derive any comfort from the vehement sensual passion of his Giaours, or the sullenness of his Laras. But while Byron was exactly what did not suit my condition, Wordsworth was exactly what did. I had looked in *The Excursion* two or three years before, and found little in it; and I should probably have found as little had I read it at this time. But the miscellaneous poems, in the two-volume edition of 1815 (to which little of value was added in the latter part of the author's life), proved to be the precise thing for my mental wants at that particular juncture.

* See *Reminiscences* by Thomas Carlyle (edited by Charles Eliot Norton), vol. ii. p. 297-309.

† See pages 146-150.

In the first place, these poems addressed themselves powerfully to one of the strongest of my pleasurable susceptibilities, the love of rural objects and natural scenery ; to which I had been indebted not only for much of the pleasure of my life, but quite recently for relief from one of my longest relapses into depression. In this power of rural beauty over me, there was a foundation laid for taking pleasure in Wordsworth's poetry ; the more so, as his scenery lies mostly among mountains, which, owing to my early Pyrenean excursion, were my ideal of natural beauty. But Wordsworth would never have had any great effect on me, if he had merely placed before me beautiful pictures of natural scenery. Scott does this still better than Wordsworth, and a very second-rate landscape does it more effectually than any poet. What made Wordsworth's poems a medicine for my state of mind, was that they expressed, not mere outward beauty, but states of feeling, and of thought coloured by feeling, under the excitement of beauty. They seemed to be the very culture of the feelings, which I was in quest of. In them I seemed to draw from a source of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasure, which could be shared in by all human beings ; which had no connection with struggle or imperfection, but would be made richer by every improvement in the physical or social condition of mankind. From them I seemed to learn what would be the perennial sources of happiness, when all the greater evils of life shall have been removed. And I felt myself at once better and happier as I came under their influence. There have certainly been, even in our own age, greater poets than Wordsworth ; but poetry of deeper and loftier feeling could not have done for me at that time what his did. I needed to be made to feel that there was real, permanent happiness in tranquil contemplation. Wordsworth taught me this, not only without turning away from, but with a greatly increased interest in, the common feelings and

common destiny of human beings. And the delight which these poems gave me, proved that with culture of this sort, there was nothing to dread from the most confirmed habit of analysis. At the conclusion of the poems came the famous Ode, falsely called Platonic, *Intimations of Immortality*; in which, along with more than his usual sweetness of melody and rhythm, and along with the two passages of grand imagery but bad philosophy so often quoted, I found that he too had had similar experience to mine; that he also had felt that the first freshness of youthful enjoyment of life was not lasting; but that he had sought for compensation, and found it, in the way in which he was now teaching me to find it. The result was that I gradually, but completely, emerged from my habitual depression, and was never again subject to it. I long continued to value Wordsworth less according to his intrinsic merits, than by the measure of what he had done for me. Compared with the greatest poets, he may be said to be the poet of unpoetical natures, possessed of quiet and contemplative tastes. But unpoetical natures are precisely those which require poetic cultivation. This cultivation Wordsworth is much more fitted to give, than poets who are intrinsically far more poets than he."

What follows is from the *Autobiography of Henry Taylor*:—*

"Following on the death of Wordsworth came the question how and by whom his life should be written. What I had to say was said in a letter to Miss Fenwick of the 24th May 1850:— ' . . . One thing I conceive will have occurred to you,—that there is no choice between a very brief biography and a very explicit one; and that a biography which should be explicit as to mere fact would lead to much misconception; and that much explanation would do nothing with

* Vol. ii. pp. 56-61.

the world at large to clear up the questions that would arise. For a composite character will always be inscrutable to the many, very often even to the few. . . .’

Miss Fenwick writes: ‘I dare say we should think much alike of the *Memoir*. It was written in far too great a hurry. The original idea of it was good; but time was wanting to select his materials and condense. A few years hence a better life may be written. For my own part, I think the life is rather buried in the biography than brought to light in it.’

Next came the question of a monument, and on this, too, my views and those of Miss Fenwick were in accord.

‘Though one would have been sorry,’ she writes, ‘had there been no demonstration of a public feeling, yet, when I think of a monument in Westminster Abbey, and know his feeling and opinion of such things, I do dislike the idea with all my disliking feelings. I never heard him approve much of any memorial excepting for statesmen and warriors. . . . Yesterday evening I visited his grave in Grasmere churchyard, as yet even without a headstone. Who that has visited, or ever shall visit, his grave in the churchyard among the mountains would wish for any monument?’

A committee was appointed, however, and a sum exceeding £2000 seems to have been subscribed. I was put upon the committee, but I have no recollection of having taken a part in its proceedings. I wrote to Miss Fenwick, 1st July 1850: ‘I do not think that I can do any good in the committee. Of course a great poet’s works are his monument, and every other must be as a molehill beside a pyramid. If there were some great sculptor living whose genius lacked an opportunity and a subject, a monument to Mr. Wordsworth might furnish one; but I know of no such person, and the bust of Mr. Southey put up in Westminster Abbey by the Committee of which I was a member (the worst, I think, of the many bad

likenesses of him), has given me a great disinclination to hazarding such things. What I should like would be simply to have a copy in marble of Chantrey's bust put up in Westminster Abbey, and another in Grasmere Church. What you say to Alice makes me think that this might probably be your feeling, and that of Mrs. Wordsworth.'

A statue and a bust were eventually produced; the former, I think, bad, the latter (by Mr. Thrupp) very good as originally moulded, from a mask, but sadly smoothed away into nothingness at the instance of some country neighbour of Wordsworth's, whose notions of refinement could not be satisfied without the obliteration of everything that was characteristic and true. The sculptor had never seen Wordsworth, and may be excused for his undue deference to the opinions of one who had been familiar with the face. But it was a lamentable defect. Some casts were taken from the unsophisticated mould,—one, at least—which I possess—and I think more. It is admirable as a likeness in my opinion, and to my knowledge in that of Mrs. Wordsworth; and there is a rough grandeur in it, with which, if it were to be converted into marble, posterity might be content.

. . . Popularity, indeed, is scarcely the word to designate the species of celebrity which Wordsworth had achieved. It is what he himself would have distinctly disclaimed. He had been accustomed to regard it as derogating from a poet's title to greatness. During the thirty years, more or less, for which his poetry was little read, this was no doubt a consolatory creed; and when it came to be much read, he would still refuse to admit that it was popular. When I adverted to the large circulation of his works,—'No,' he said, 'a steady moderate sale';—and there was this much truth in it, that to the reading *populace* his poetry never did reach, and probably never will. For my own part I see no reason why contemporaneous popularity should argue eventual evanescence,

when the poetic elements are various, some commending themselves to the shallower mind, some to the deeper. If I am to adopt Wordsworth's doctrine, I should found it on history rather than on theory; and no doubt there is to be said for it, that the poets—at least the English poets—who have been most famous in their day and generation, have not taken a corresponding rank, in the days and generations that have followed."

THE END.

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